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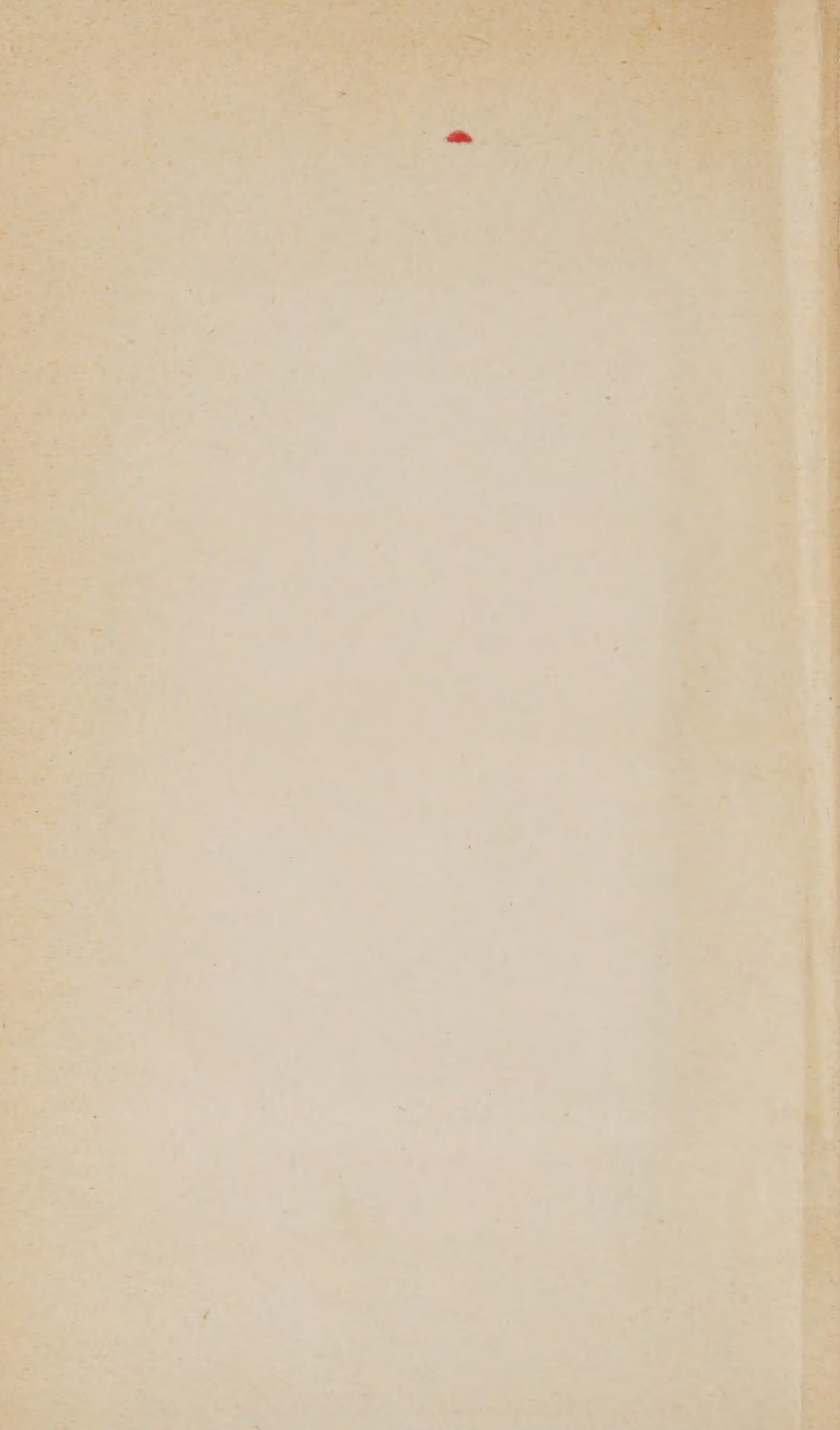




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HENRY FOX

FIRST LORD HOLLAND

A STUDY OF THE CAREER OF
AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY POLITICIAN

BY

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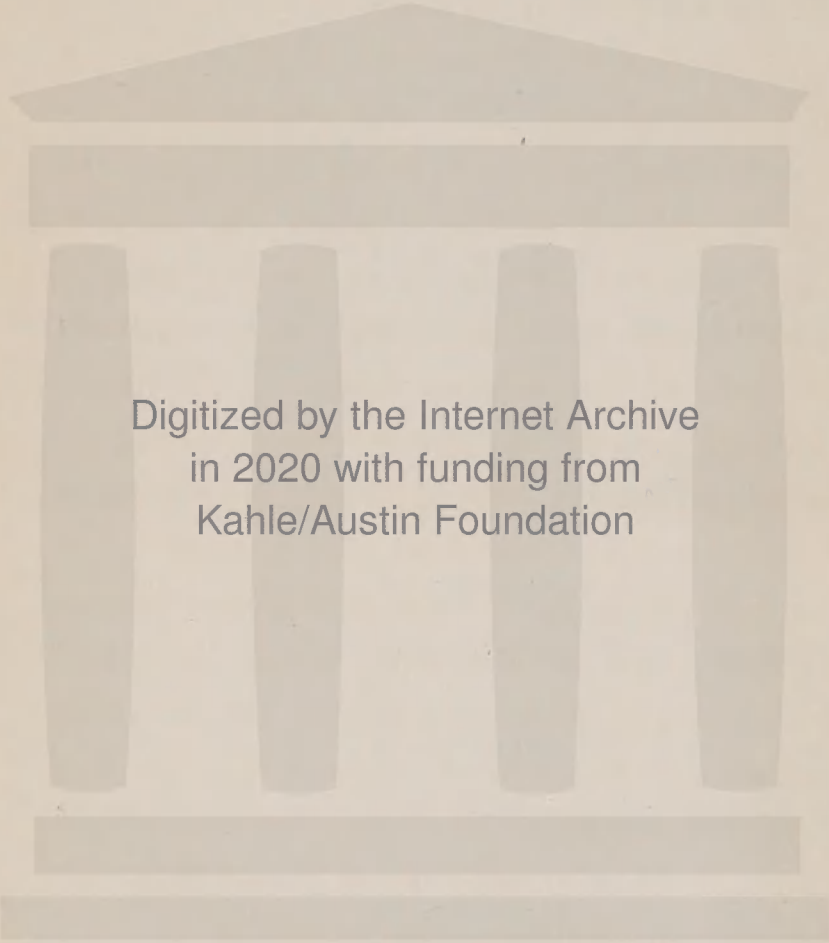
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PREFATORY NOTE

A FEW words may not be amiss on the authorities upon which this work is based, as well as its general purpose, arrangement, and method of treatment. Some difficulties have to be faced in any attempt to draw an accurate sketch of Henry Fox. Apart from his published memoirs (covering the first few years of George III's reign) and some scattered letters from various sources, we have few of his own writings on which to base our judgement of his character and career. The chief source for a study of Fox (apart from such of his own writings as we have) must still be the unpublished papers belonging to the Duke of Newcastle, which bring one closely in touch with the politics of the time, and especially with that ministry with which Fox was so closely identified. Next in importance are Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, which give us our principal information relating to Fox's career under Pelham, and his activity in Parliament, both then and later. One is thus compelled too often to look at Fox through the spectacles of his enemies, for in this number must Walpole

be included before he completed his narrative. Incidentally I may say that in his earlier memoirs he treats Fox (unlike many others) with comparative fairness, but in the *Memoirs of the Reign of George III* he certainly does not, and I have decided to regard his later testimony as doubtful, unless it can bear the test of comparison with other authorities. A less important but far more trustworthy authority is Lord Waldegrave, who gives us in his *Memoirs* much information of a political nature. Added to this, we have the published correspondence of Chatham, Walpole, Lyttelton, Chesterfield and the Grenvilles respectively, for occasional material not elsewhere found.

One of the most valuable sources of information as giving us Fox's expressed attitude on matters of policy and his own version of different events is the *Diary* of Bubb Doddington; and since many, if not most, of his important entries are substantially confirmed by other sources, I have come to regard him as a remarkably accurate witness. The published letters of Fox (to which I have alluded) are to be found chiefly in the *Bedford Correspondence*, the *Devonshire Papers* quoted extensively in Torrens's *History of British Cabinets*, the *Digby Papers* in the eighth report of the *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, the appendices to Walpole's

and Waldegrave's *Memoirs* respectively, the selections from the *Hanbury Papers* published in Coxe's *Memoirs of Lord Walpole*, and some letters from the *Lansdowne Papers* in Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*,—the latter being (together with Fox's own *Memoirs*) our chief authority for the events of his life during the years 1761–3. There are two small unpublished collections of letters in the British Museum addressed to his friends Williams and Collinson respectively, and I have also found an important letter (only part of which has been printed) in the Coxe collection in the British Museum. His Foreign Office dispatches are, of course, in the Public Record Office.

For the general background of the work my chief sources have been Coxe's *Pelham Administration* for the period with which it deals, and the *Newcastle* and *Hardwicke Papers* respectively for the later years with which the work is concerned.

A few words regarding Fox's own *Memoirs* may not be out of place. Whereas it is true that his judgements of men and of movements must sometimes be treated with caution, the facts which he gives us nearly always bear the test of comparison with the *Newcastle Papers* and with the contemporary evidence in Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*. It is to be regretted that Fox gives us no account of

his work for the Peace in 1762, since our sources (based either upon Walpole or the Newcastles) are usually to his prejudice, and we cannot properly test them. Perhaps more unfortunate for our purpose is the almost entire lack of information upon his career under Sir Robert Walpole.

Of secondary authorities I am chiefly indebted to Dr. von Ruville, who gives us, in my opinion, a clear and generally accurate portrayal of the elder Pitt, and to M. Waddington, who tells almost all that one need know of the diplomatic negotiations in the years 1754-6. Lastly, I must pay my tribute to Lecky's great work, which must always remain of the highest value in depicting the 'spirit' of the eighteenth century.

I should like here to acknowledge my indebtedness to Prof. E. A. Smith, of Princeton University, for his kindness in allowing me to utilize his transcripts of Mirepoix's letters, and to Mr. J. A. Herbert, of the British Museum, for his unfailing courtesy and helpful attention while I was engaged in the work of research in the manuscript room. I am also indebted to Miss Clara W. Bragg, of Columbia Library, and to Mr. Henry Hinds and many other good friends, for their valued assistance in various features of the work ; and above all to Mr. Grant Robertson, of All Souls College,

Oxford, for his helpful criticism and advice throughout the undertaking. I cannot hope that the book may not reveal many blemishes of one sort or another, but without his careful perusal I should certainly have overlooked much that required modification. Finally I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to Dr. William Hunt for a few words of encouragement that will never be forgotten.

So far as arrangement is concerned, I may say that I deemed it advisable, in view of the occasional complexity of political motives and movements, not to subject myself invariably to a strict chronological order in the planning of consecutive chapters ; yet I have always desired to keep the reader conscious of the general inter-relationship of coincident movements treated topically as separate. The Introduction to a study of politics might have been lengthened out indefinitely, and the temptation to discuss the origin and evolution of a system of corruption has naturally been a strong one ; but some discrimination had obviously to be made, and accordingly the Introduction is but a preliminary survey and a study of certain aspects of the period as a whole. The two opening chapters are also more or less introductory ; yet we must needs trace the rise of Fox to prominence as well as

treat of the condition of parties during the Pelham Administration. It is not, as we shall see, until 1754 that Fox reaches his political maturity; while the terminating point in his public career is his definite retirement in 1763. It has been my intention that his social life and later years should lie outside the present work, since without his private papers little can be added to what Sir George Trevelyan has so admirably given us in his little volume, *The Early History of Charles James Fox*. Still, in order that the reader, after finishing the pages devoted to his career, may obtain some impression of the brighter side of the man's character, I have added a final chapter dealing with the subjects just mentioned, as well as presenting an effort to form some definite conclusions regarding his career as a whole.

Since Fox was primarily a politician, this biography has been essentially a history of politics during the period in which his active career is comprised, and my purpose has been to deal with the subject, in a measure, from the standpoint of political parties, and especially factions within those parties. Whereas I have always desired that Fox should be the central figure of the picture which I have drawn, I have tried also to depict the various administrations in which he was concerned

as I conceive them; and more especially the character and policy of his three prominent contemporaries,—Newcastle, Pitt and Bute. It has thus been my endeavour, in a general way, to analyse the character and development of the Newcastle ascendancy, to note the contrast presented by the short supremacy of Pitt which followed, and to trace from the beginning the influence and power of Bute. But the chief *motif* of the picture I have always intended to be Fox himself—his particular qualities, his work, his party, his place in the history of the period, and the reasons why he never attained to greatness. The ‘inner mysteries’ of the War and Pay Offices are well worthy of future treatment, but until the Holland House papers are published it will be hardly possible to give a proper exposition of these features of his activity, and so I have dwelt but briefly upon the subject. Party-management—whether in parliamentary debate or ‘practical politics’—must inevitably be the central theme of a study of Fox’s career.

A study of Henry Fox is justified, I think, on three main grounds—first because it gives us an insight into the character and importance of politics during his time, secondly by reason of his well-known rivalry with the elder Pitt (a rivalry duplicated in

the second generation), and thirdly because he happens to be the father of one of the world's most illustrious statesmen. To make a hero of Fox would be virtually impossible, and I certainly have no desire to do so. But the only way to present him fairly before the bar of History is to depict the politics and political methods of his age; and this has been my endeavour—at the risk sometimes of being tedious and diffuse. Pitt once called Fox 'the blackest man that he ever knew'. If I have shown that he was actually no 'blackier' than most of his contemporaries (when they got the chance), but was simply more successful in a system of politics that was 'black', I shall have accomplished all that Fox deserves by way of rehabilitation. Others have already done justice to his abilities.

T. W. R.

INTRODUCTION

It has been the privilege—or the misfortune—of three of the great nations of Europe to attain in the course of their history a degree of ascendancy that has been dangerous to the civilized world. Spain in the sixteenth century, and France in the seventeenth (and again in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth) have exhibited that common ideal of patriotism which, when pursued with extraordinary success, has been regardless of the rights and feelings of nations, and in the end has reacted painfully upon the object of its being. The fact that there was no limit (other things being equal) to the extension of a nation's power was to a large degree the result of the absolute want of morality in international relations. Each nation may be said to have had such a code unto itself, which (however we may determine its peculiar advantages) was scarcely to be regarded as other than its own selfish interests or the interests of its dynasty. Moreover, France and Spain had each, in its early ascendancy, thriven on its contempt for popular rights. The claims of individuals were for long an unfelt element. It was England who of all great modern states was first to feel that the soul of a nation's polity existed elsewhere than in the Crown. Herein, we may say, lies the fundamental

reason why the upward march of England in the eighteenth century differed widely in aims and character from the rise and progress of the other two states. And yet the lesson is very much the same, and the results are in many respects comparable. Indeed, both in motive and in object, the ascendancy of England was quite as perilous to the world as the aggressiveness of Louis or the intrusiveness of Philip. It was the result partly of some conception of democracy and partly of a consciousness of insularity that England steadily acquired her means of enforcing a maritime tyranny. Commercial interests dictated an arrogant imperialism. On the one hand, no dynasty in England was allowed to compete for the primacy in Europe; on the other hand, no rival existed sufficiently strong or far-sighted to be able to challenge her sovereignty of the seas. If it is true that France and Spain had disturbed the balance of power in Europe, it is equally true that Great Britain disturbed the balance of power in the world.

But here again a policy, both aggressive and triumphant, reacted painfully upon the interests of the nation which pursued it. The victories of Marlborough had opened the way to future greatness. The installation of George I had made the policy of the nation practicable. Both at home and abroad the Whigs' commercialism was unscathed; for the tyranny of France was ended and the power of the Tories broken. Hence the minds of Englishmen were turned from the problems

of domestic statesmanship, and they settled themselves down to a period of selfish materialism. It would seem as though the Revolution had in their minds sufficiently vindicated their claims to the right of self-government. The peaceful torpor of the reigns of the first two Georges presents an interesting contrast to the conflicts over measures in the reigns of William and Anne. It was the existence of two strong parties which had made such struggles possible; and the novelty of a recent revolution had developed an ardour for legislating. But as soon as the Whigs had released themselves from vigorous competition, they were content to bask in the sunlight of the rising commercial state. The fear of a reaction was but slight when their policy itself was so profitable. And so, while Chatham humbled France and raised the standard of imperialism, the Liberalism of England was stunted in its infancy.

It is perhaps in England that we see the indolent spirit of the eighteenth century most interestingly typified. Too often has a struggle for wealth crowned with material prosperity had an enervating effect upon the better nature of men. Such had been the misfortune of the Whig Party in England. Not only were they fortified by an insidious system of corruption, but they represented (broadly speaking) a plutocratic oligarchy, which suffered no innovation, however salutary, to hamper their primacy or jeopardize their interests. Since, moreover, they held sway over the Commons (from 1688 the centre

of authority), neither king nor minister was suffered to pursue a policy that was not acceptable to the commercial hierarchy. Thus the despotism of a party had in a sense supplanted the despotism of the Crown.

In many respects there is little doubt but that the nation benefited; but there were several classes that suffered, and there were dangerous forces to be wrestled with—the more dangerous in proportion as time lent them strength. We have dwelt on one aspect of a maritime tyranny, and we shall study hereafter the effects of corruption. Since the cynicism, the selfishness, and the almost entire absence of principle on the part of most public men were both the cause and the reflection of the political system in vogue, it would certainly have been strange if the output were other than frequently selfish and brutal. Hence we may note (as a few examples of this evil) the religious and economic persecution of the Irish; the various disabilities of Nonconformists, Jews, and foreign Protestants; the tyrannical treatment of Atterbury and Murray; the obstinate maintenance of septennial parliaments; the diplomatic coercion of Austria; and the naval aggression against France. Commercially or politically these measures might be justified, but the motives behind them were none the less selfish.

And yet, notwithstanding abuses of power, we must bear in mind that the tyranny of England's commercial system is hardly more to be reprehended

in its way than the corrupt and despotic government of France, or the semi-feudal decadence of the Empire. England was still the most prosperous and enlightened country of Europe, far in advance of her rivals in solving the problems of government, of justice and of finance. It was the misfortune and stigma of England that after going to such lengths with the problems of statesmanship she should have deliberately decided to pause in her work. Where everything depends upon a system of politics corrupt to the core, and no opposition exists with sufficient force or integrity to rouse public sentiment to appreciate these conditions—where, finally, there is an almost invincible organization with men at the head who are guided by nothing but the interest of the party that made them, we have practically the régime of an indolent and unprogressive oligarchy. It is scarcely improved when *one* man, shrewd in his perception of the means of keeping his grip on the power he has amassed, is able to determine the policy of the Government. In such a system as we have outlined reform is virtually impossible.

Walpole was in many respects a benevolent despot. He did not labour, it is true, to remedy existing abuses, and it is probable that he left politics worse than he found them. But with all his callous indifference and want of moral conceptions, Walpole carried through a programme that enormously benefited both party and country. The groundwork of his policy was simple in the

extreme : he avoided all risk of disturbance at home and abroad, and gave the nation every chance to utilize its natural channels of wealth. The result was a period of great national prosperity. It meant peace, but not an ignoble peace ; the means of strength without the employment of them ; and the concentration of energies without the abuse of them. Gradually, it may be said, the foundations were laid of Chatham's world-wide imperialism.

But Walpole had enemies to whom his ascendancy was a barrier. While he did no more than appease the appetite of plutocrats, it was almost impossible to dislodge him ; but let him commit one political indiscretion and his enemies would find an interest in undermining his power. It was Walpole's policy to suffer no resistance. But to agree with him was only to bask in the shadow of his greatness. Hence, the struggle of individualism against monopoly.

We need not trace the steps which led to the great Minister's fall. Once the Opposition had gained the weapon of public sentiment, the power of Walpole was fatally shattered. The rivals whom he had feared were unreconciled to exclusion ; while the nation which he had benefited was weary of a period of flourishing stagnation, and yearned to try the strength which the Minister had given it. And so, little by little, the great structure collapsed. It then became the duty of the victors to prove their right to the spoils.

Who, then, were the men who led the Opposition to victory ? First, there was Newcastle, Walpole's trusted subaltern, who had intrigued against his chief in the days of his decline. Next, there was Pulteney, the eloquent orator, who looked only for revenge, and had scorned all emoluments. Thirdly, there was Carteret, brilliant but erratic, whose diplomatic talents had roused Walpole's distrust. Finally there was Pitt, who, with Lyttelton and others, had whipped up the nation's enthusiasm for war. Such were the men who were now called upon to act.

But a process of elimination was at once to take place. Pulteney suddenly bartered his popularity for a peerage and was granted the earldom of Bath ; while Pitt and his little party proved unacceptable to the others, and were hated by the King. This left the field open between Carteret and Newcastle. The one had talent, the other experience, and each possessed a portfolio as Secretary of State ; while the Duke's younger brother, Henry Pelham, who had kept himself clear of the conspiracy against Walpole, would accept nothing as yet but the Pay Office. For the Treasury was selected the in-offensive Lord Wilmington—a significant reaction after the reign of an over-powerful First Minister.

It was a foregone conclusion that Walpole's policy would be reversed—in fact it had been so already. The war with Spain, which Walpole's tact might possibly have averted, had become suddenly absorbed into the more extensive and more serious war between Austria and her plunder-

ing neighbours ; and here at last was Carteret's golden opportunity.

There is no doubt but that the new guide of England's foreign policy was a man of extraordinary gifts. In intellectual training, shrewdness of conception, and diplomatic boldness, he was perhaps unsurpassed by any of his age. But Carteret's great weakness was his lack of that very weapon which his less able but more methodical rival possessed ; he held no political strength of his own. Despising the drudgery of the manifold details, which the times rendered necessary if the broader results were to be attained, he had taken no pains to cement the allegiance of his colleagues or gain the semblance of a party, while he steadily ignored all authority but the King. The history of the last ten years should have led him to respect the sensitive self-complacency of Newcastle. In that oversight lay the veto of his projects and the termination of his lease of power.

It was accordingly a struggle between the personality of Carteret backed by the royal favour, and the power of Newcastle founded upon a large parliamentary following and assisted by the sentiment of the nation, now easily induced to believe that British interests were being sacrificed to Hanover and Vienna. In such a state of affairs—especially considering the importance which politics possessed in the eighteenth century—there was scarcely any question which force would prevail. In July 1743 Lord Wilmington was suc-

ceeded by Pelham as First Lord of the Treasury. An attempt on the part of Carteret to set up his old associate, Lord Bath, had met with complete failure. Thereafter it was only a question of time when the brilliant diplomatist would be forced to capitulate ; and when at last every resource had been tried, and tried in vain, Lord Carteret yielded up the Seals (November 23, 1744).

The foreign policy of Carteret (who became Earl Granville in that same year) cannot be expounded here in detail. It was rigidly continental, and, in consequence, reactionary. Whilst the proper and traditional influence in determining the Government's foreign policy was the nation's commercial interest, the trend of Carteret's policy lay entirely in the direction of a system of foreign alliances. And herein lay the best political capital for his enemies. Without doubt the real enemy of Carteret was France, and Austria was but a stepping-stone for the attainment of his ends ; but the King had other interests, and the King was all the backing upon which Carteret could depend. Thus the secondary—and yet very important—influence in shaping British foreign policy was the security of the Electorate of Hanover. When the Whigs engaged the Elector to come over and become their sovereign and guarantee their constitution against the legitimist dynasty, the price of that bargain—at least tacitly admitted—was the guardianship of Hanover ; and if, moreover, the Whigs thus confirmed their ascendancy by alliance with this

collateral branch of the old royal house, the Electorate was certainly entitled to some measure of regard. Walpole would have let this (as well as other contentious questions) remain dormant ; and while it is hardly correct to say that he was for peace at any price, he was thoroughly aware that the interests of trade were the primary consideration, and that peace was essential. It was for this reason that the Austro-Hanoverian policy of Carteret, with its hopes and its entanglements, showed unmistakable signs of a reaction. The two men regarded even the alliance with Vienna from wholly different standpoints. Moreover, while it is true that the formation of a continental 'system' financed by Great Britain was but an imitation of Townshend's policy in 1725-7, the *magnum onus* in such a policy was the task of persuading the Commons to vote the necessary grants, since the Minister was working *ostensibly* in the interest of the Elector of Hanover. The political capital for his enemies is obvious. No doubt the task of trimming between Crown and Parliament would alone have been considerably perplexing to Carteret, but when we consider also his lack of political support, it is clear that no chance of his maintaining himself was possible. In the present instance jealousy was probably the moving factor and a hostile organization precipitated his ruin.

Thus the real cause of Carteret's downfall was not merely his alleged neglect of maritime interests in favour of Hanover. The case is, rather, a singu-

larly striking example of the importance of political power in the middle of the eighteenth century. Organized on a custom of profuse and systematic bribery, and fortified by a seven years' tenure, the House of Commons might defy a statesman as long as it willed, unless he were the one who actually controlled its prerogatives. By the force of obligation, the purchase of votes, and the several evils of the existing electoral system, it was hardly a difficult matter for a preponderance of boroughs to slide under the control of one politician or one political interest. Similarly the Cabinet, which had thriven under the Whigs' dynastic policy, was equally submissive to the dominant interest—the fountain whence sprang all official success. The one thing to dread was, of course, public sentiment, but unhappily that force is notoriously patient. In the case of Carteret, who lacked both of these important supports, failure could only be doubly inevitable. Walpole is regarded as the arch-organizer of corruption, and his vicious system was passed on to be pursued with equal success by his heir and nominee, Henry Pelham, and by the latter's brother, the Duke of Newcastle.

The man who succeeded Wilmington at the Treasury and Walpole in parliamentary management was an odd composition of strength and weakness. To read him correctly one must realize that the keynote of Pelham's policy was conciliation. It was for this that he overlooked the shortcomings of colleagues, acquiesced in the will of his brother,

and submitted to rather than educated public sentiment. Yet probably no one was more eminently fitted to weld together the atoms of party and faction than this man of quiet dignity and timid caution.

Intellectually the First Minister was neither brilliant nor versatile. Though a capable financier, he showed a lamentable ignorance of foreign affairs, and he was both too deeply a politician and too little of a statesman—in the idealistic sense—ever to become a successful reformer. In the House of Commons he was particularly efficient—was a grave but clear and forceful speaker, an accurate judge of the temper of his audience, and tactful in his dealings with its members. His learned biographer has called his ‘knowledge, more useful than extensive; his understanding more solid than brilliant’. *In toto* Henry Pelham was a Minister who would ensure the nation against a fatal retrogression or an egregious error; and impress temporary stability by a policy of pacification.

The Duke of Newcastle had at the same time more force and more weakness than his brother. His crowning fault, a lust of power, suffered no man (if weaker) to thwart his will, while his preconceived notions of the correctness of a policy were fatal alike to the nation and to himself. Moreover the impulse of fear could drive him many lengths beyond Pelham’s limit in concession, while on the other hand it might lead him into violence never contemplated by the calmer brother.

As politicians, each had his special merit which supplemented the other's—Newcastle rather as an organizer, Pelham as the tactful regulator. Very early in his career the Duke had laid the foundations of their parliamentary power, and though neither possessed the finishing touch of Walpole—a magnetic control—the Duke was fully his equal in the pertinacity and skill of a corruptionist. The structure which he was rearing under the very eye of Walpole became the bulwark of his own and his brother's future power ; and yet outside of it he was politically beneath contempt.

Neither may have been, in politics, unselfish ; but Pelham could be loyal even to a fallen Minister. Newcastle, on the other hand, was all his life true to no one but himself—not even invariably true to the one man whose cleverness could govern him, and whose family interest justified the necessary patience. If Pelham's nature knew no treachery, Newcastle had an appetite for intrigue that was insatiable. His vanity—which always made him a prey to flattery and over-confidence—was attended by a temper that was irascible when crossed, and seldom if ever inspired respect ; for he had neither his brother's quiet dignity nor the latter's ambition—secondary, if you will—to justify his high station. Naturally his self-love made him enjoy the rôle of patron, and such an office he could administer intelligently and well.

As a Minister, the Duke showed exemplary industry ; in all save politics was a man of honour ;

and revealed no trace throughout his long career of any sordid desire to enrich himself. Outside of his chosen sphere he was enlightened, benevolent, and, like Pelham again, morally upright. Perhaps if his period of supremacy had been less fraught with difficulties and dangers, the verdict of historians might have been other than what it is.

We have now considered briefly the political world in the period preceding the Pelham Administration. The power of one man has given way to the power of many, which, in turn, is followed by a struggle between two factions, resulting in the dual ascendancy of the Pelhams. The work of destruction is at last completed. The task for the brothers is now the moulding and cementing which shall form the constructive side of their policy.

CHAPTER I

RIVAL LIEUTENANTS

‘Fox you cannot do without.’ Such was the counsel given by Lord Orford¹ to his chosen successor in a letter in which he dwelt upon the value of certain men in the Commons;² such in fact may serve as our introduction to the great party leader, who had until now impressed few save the man who read his contemporaries so accurately. Although his career might be said to lie before him, Fox had long since passed the halcyon days of youth. He was at this time in his fortieth year, a man slightly above medium height, thick-set without any of the stoutness apparent in his later years, and graceful in his posture and carriage. In colouring he was very dark and of feature rather unpronounced; but a slightly projecting upper-lip seemed to indicate a merry humour that might have come out when bidden, and a pair of keen eyes gave character to a face that was in most respects rather commonplace.

¹ On his retirement from office Walpole was raised to the House of Lords as Earl of Orford.

² Orford to Pelham, August 25, 1743: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 91. (The reader is asked to note that whenever a letter is cited in evidence, reference is made to the page or (in the case of MSS.) the folio on which the letter begins.)

His father, Sir Stephen Fox, had been a man of average intellect and more than average integrity. The son of parents of humble extraction, he had begun life, it is said, as a chorister, and ended it high in the public esteem. Yet there was little that was striking in his abilities, and he rose more by his perseverance and quiet dignity than through any display of conspicuous talent.

Evelyn writes of Fox's kindly and upright character; and his vote against the impeachment of Clarendon showed the independence of his political mind. It was Clarendon, indeed, who had persuaded Charles II, while in exile, to place the interests of his household under the intelligent care of Stephen Fox, and the latter had the honour to be the first to announce to his royal patron that the military despot no longer lived to keep him from his heritage. But duty had its reward. Before the year of the Restoration had elapsed Fox was graciously appointed Paymaster-General of His Majesty's forces—an office just created to meet a pressing need. Five years later he was knighted, and in 1679 he became a commissioner of the Treasury.

All this, no doubt, gives us evidence of his loyalty. In politics Fox was naturally of the creed whence Tories sprang—a creed that was fittingly exemplified in the career of the minister Danby. But perhaps the only blot upon an enviable reputation was the discovery that he had corrupted twenty-seven members of the House of Commons,

—at the instance (as we may deduce) of his master, or possibly of Danby.³ Fortunately this seems to have counted for little in the easy political ethics of the reign of Charles II.

Fox appeals to us as a man who made the most of what was in him. A shrewd mind, a generous heart, a certain measure of independence, and a fidelity that comes of gratitude—such of his qualities are worth remembering when we come to study his son. But Sir Stephen was no leader; he had none of the parliamentary talent or political ambition which distinguished his more famous son and grandson. On the other hand, he never showed himself a political opportunist; it was rather his tact and his sincerity that enabled him to rise with credit and avoid disgrace throughout a period of uncommon pitfalls. He was, as Sir George Trevelyan says, a favourite with four monarchs and with twelve successive parliaments.

On the accession of James, Fox seems to have preserved his reputation for loyalty without sacrificing his religious beliefs,⁴ and was so far successful in a difficult position that he remained acceptable to the new régime that followed. Yet it was characteristic of the man that he had refused to unite in the measures against the King, 'whose and his brother's bread he had so plentifully

³ See Anchitel Grey's *Debates of the House of Commons* (1667-94), VII. 315-24. The truth came out as the result of a Parliamentary inquiry.

⁴ Sir Stephen was offered a peerage on condition of becoming a Catholic, but declined.

eaten of.’⁵ He continued to serve the Government of William in spite of all the shifts of politics; and it was not until the reign of Anne that he retired into private life to enjoy the liberal dispensing of a wealth that no one grudged him.⁶ Such, it seems, was Fate’s reward for prudence. In a time when many men had played for greater stakes and lost, Stephen Fox amassed a fortune from his privileges as Paymaster.⁷ Was it unnatural that a son of his should follow in his footsteps?

Yet all Sir Stephen’s labour and ingenuity seemed vain, as no son of his had sons that might inherit his great wealth. Being, however, ‘unwilling that so plentiful an estate should go out of his name,’ and being also ‘of a vegete and hale constitution’, Sir Stephen, when seventy-six, took to himself a second wife⁸—the daughter of a clergyman of Lincolnshire, by whom he had four children. The

⁵ *Memoirs of the Life of Stephen Fox, Kt.*, p. 83.

⁶ Evelyn writes of his wealth as ‘honestly got and unenvied, which is a marvel’. In 1680 he estimated Fox’s fortune at £200,000.—*Memoirs and Diary* (ed. Bray, 1827), III. 36.

⁷ Fox gave his friend, Pepys, some account of the way he gained his wealth. It seems that he advanced money on his own private credit to pay the weekly wages of the army, on condition of deducting a commission of one shilling in the pound. Then, if at the end of four months the Government was unable to pay its debt, the Paymaster received 8 per cent on all the money owed him.—Pepys, *Diary* (ed. Wheatley), VI. 126. Doubtless the chronic insolvency of Charles II was responsible for such opportunities.

⁸ Christian Hopes was her name. A brief account of her parentage, with correction of certain erroneous traditions, is given in Chester, *Westminster Abbey Registers*, p. 262.

younger of the two sons was Henry, born September 28, 1705. Christian, the youngest daughter and twin-sister to Henry, died in the following January as the result of a fall from a window.⁹ The other three children, Stephen, Charlotte and Henry, lived to enjoy the 'plentiful estate'.

Sir Stephen Fox died in 1716, and three years later his good wife followed him. Almost the only glimpse we have of Lady Fox is in the advice she left her sons,—in the curious document still to be read in Henry Fox's boyish hand.¹⁰ 'Don't be a fop, don't be a rake,' she counselled the elder. 'Mind on your name, Stephen Fox; that I hope will keep you from being wicked. You, Harry, having a less fortune, won't be subject to so many temptations; but withstand those you have when you grow up. Then you'll learn to swear, to rake about, to game, and at last be ruined by those you unhappily think your friends.' The mother could not foresee that her younger son was the one to encounter the greater temptations of a political life.

Henry Fox's birthplace was Chiswick, where his father had built the villa in which he had ended his days. Of his boyhood we know almost nothing, save that he entered Eton in course of time, and chance made him a playfellow of Pitt, Lyttelton and Hanbury Williams. Whether the great rivalry that later became so prominent a factor in his career had its beginnings on the banks of the placid

⁹ Collins, *Peerage*, IV. 538.

¹⁰ Liechtenstein, *Holland House*, I. 41.

stream at Windsor, is not for us to learn; nor have we any records of his proficiency in his studies, save a reputation for classical knowledge¹¹ which he shared with his rival. At the age of fifteen Fox entered Oxford, matriculating at Christ Church, February 20, 1721;¹² but we know that he never obtained a degree, and he is said to have left Oxford in 1724.¹³ Doubtless we are safe in assuming that he had wasted his opportunities and fallen rapidly into debt. His nominal allowance until he came of age was £200 a year—with what additions we do not know—but we are given to understand that he squandered all he had, or at least all he could lay hands on. Our next record of Fox is a journey to France, where he made the acquaintance of the Duchess of Portsmouth, sometime mistress of Charles II. Just how or why he obtained an entrée into the lady's social circle is unfortunately not told us, but Fox had very winning ways—a trait which may be considered in his case as both an advantage and a misfortune. It is even said that she gave him freely of her purse; but at all events an inherent passion for gambling and a heedless disregard for morals in

¹¹ Liechtenstein, *Holland House*, I. 43. We find that Fox used to indulge in a Latin correspondence with Lord Hervey.—Hervey, *Memoirs of George II* (ed. Croker), I. xlix. As we may gather from an anecdote of Shelburne's, Sir Robert Walpole greatly envied Fox's avidity as a reader.—Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, I.

¹² *Alumni Oxonienses* (ed. 1888), II. 487.

¹³ Creasy, *Memoirs of Eminent Etonians*, p. 308.

the capital of the light-hearted world had speedily depleted his patrimony ; and in this situation he returned to a home where unfortunately there had been no older or wiser head to counsel him.¹⁴

The prospects of Fox on his return were not very encouraging, and, having remained by inheritance a Tory, he met with signal defeat in his first effort to secure a seat in the House of Commons.¹⁵ Clearly he was on the wrong side, as conditions then existed in the political world. Still, if it was certain that his political fortunes were wofully in need of material assistance, it was equally certain that both taste and talent pointed the way to a public career—if only he could convince the men in power that his abilities were worth a trial. His first duty, then, was to change his political creed and become a Whig—a step which probably involved but little hesitation on his part. His elder brother, Stephen, had already become a protégé of the Ministry through his intimacy with the dissolute but influential Lord Hervey, and in 1735 was temporarily designated for the position of secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.¹⁶

¹⁴ The facts about his sojourn in France are given us by Creasy, p. 308, and Chesterfield's sketch of Fox, *Chesterfield's Letters* (ed. Bradshaw), III. 1426.

¹⁵ He was elected and took his seat, but was thrown out as the result of a petition.—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, 80.

¹⁶ The idea was abandoned, as Lord Scarborough (whom Fox was to serve) declined, in the end, to accept the post.—Hervey, *Memoirs of the Court of George II* (ed. Croker), II. 163-4.

Fox had, therefore, every inducement to attach himself to the one party which could amply repay his services; while in the meantime his natural attractiveness and facility for making friends easily won him the useful companionship of such men as Hervey and Thomas Winnington.¹⁷ And so Fox drank with them and gamed with them and patiently awaited an 'opening'. And it came at last, in January 1733, in the shape of a subordinate post under the Treasury—that of Receiver-General of the Revenue for certain counties.¹⁸

It is easy, of course, to point to this political conversion as Fox's first exhibition of indifference to methods in the attainment of ends. Yet we can hardly feel sure that he may not have been simply throwing off an ancestral cloak which for obvious reasons never fitted him.¹⁹ Certainly Fox was by nature too independent—too lawless perhaps—to remain a Tory by conviction; and since Toryism meant Jacobitism, it would clearly never appeal to such a man as Henry Fox, who was neither a visionary on the one hand nor an idealist on the other. But his action from another aspect

¹⁷ Walpole tells us that on one occasion Fox served as Hervey's second in a duel.—*Memoirs of George II*, I. 81. See below, note 26.

¹⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1733, p. 48; *London Magazine* for 1733, p. 43.

¹⁹ Sir George Trevelyan observes that certain rites in his father's household were quite calculated to give him a distaste for Toryism. See Russell, *Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox*, I. 4.

was certainly political. It was perhaps the connexion which Stephen Fox enjoyed with prominent supporters of the Administration—a bond close enough to induce him to decline a bribe from the Ministry's enemies ²⁰—that prevented the younger brother from committing a blunder which might have meant for him years of discontent and unsatisfied ambition. Fox never, in fact, attempted to curry favour with the factious Prince of Wales. In other words, he attached himself to the main body of Whigs which supported Walpole, instead of following the path of dangerous intimacy with the man who was at the same time the heir of George II and the patron of the Opposition. Here is where Fox and Pitt diverged at the outset. The latter, together with George and Richard Grenville and George Lyttelton, was enjoying the patronage of Lord Cobham, who held a high place in the ranks of the factious minority of Whigs—the small but determined following of Frederick, Prince of Wales; consequently, while Fox was serving Walpole, his future rival was paying court to the Prince's mistress, Lady Hamilton.²¹ Obviously such might well have been a promising policy to pursue.

²⁰ Stephen was offered the promise of a peerage by the Prince of Wales on condition that he should abandon the Ministry; and Hervey made good use of his friend's refusal in recommending him to the King.—Hervey, *Memoirs*, III. 45.

²¹ Autobiography of Shelburne, Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, I. 60.

if the King's son had possessed the slightest semblance of integrity or talent; but when we add the fact that the usual scheme of advancement depended upon a system of widespread corruption, emanating from the men who possessed the principal means with which to corrupt, we can readily perceive that the man who followed the usual course of place-hunters and office-seekers would be far more likely to succeed in the end than he who sought to rise by methods less conventional. Of course, it was one thing to grasp at a sinecure, and quite another to rise to a post of prominence. Yet here again Fox was in no danger of courting failure, for he seems to have possessed intuitively a peculiar alertness for observing opportunities. The fact that he once chose the wrong leader in the course of his career was due rather to cupidity of the moment than to any lack of perception as to the wiser course to follow. At the outset of his career Fox took no chances.

And so, not discouraged by present circumstances, this young ne'er-do-well applied himself diligently to politics, and fostered an ambition which soon came to the notice of Sir Robert Walpole. With his keen, if sometimes cynical, insight into human character, the great organizer saw in Fox an adjutant fitted by natural talent for the political jobbery so indispensable to Ministers. It was probably under his auspices that Fox made his first entry into Parliament in

1735 for the borough of Hindon, in Wiltshire ; and six years later he was returned for Windsor, which he represented continuously until the dissolution of 1761. On all occasions during his political apprenticeship Fox kept both his eyes and his ears open to the changes and conditions around him. In 1737, by carefully observing the tactics of the Opposition, he was enabled to warn his friend, Hervey, that the Prince would certainly bring into Parliament his quarrel with the Crown over the fixing of his allowance.²² Not only was his prophecy borne out by the course of events, but the Ministry could easily discern his value as an observer of political undercurrents. When the suspicion came to be felt that a supposititious son might appear at the Prince's court, Hervey promptly sent Fox to Walpole as a man who was both ' sensible ' and ' clever '—in fact just the one most fitted for the task of ' making discoveries '.²³ Such services from a subordinate were almost certain to bring advancement; and already in 1737 Hervey had got his friend appointed Surveyor-General of the Works, ' an office not only creditable but worth above eleven hundred pounds a year '.²⁴ It was Fox's first promotion in his political career ; and he never forgot his debt to the great man who had humoured Hervey's wish and given his friend a start. Four years later Stephen Fox was likewise

²² Hervey, *Memoirs*, III. 41.

²³ Ibid. III. 180.

²⁴ Ibid. III. 146 ; *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1737, p. 334.

remembered, receiving as his reward the barony of Ilchester.²⁵

It may be well to note here, in passing, that Fox had ceased to be a bachelor. In February 1733 he had married Penelope Dyves, one of Queen Caroline's maids of honour.²⁶ Little is known of the bride, or whether the marriage turned out happily. We know that she died within the next few years; and no children were born of the union.

In Parliament Fox gave no startling display of brilliancy, and seems rather to have won his spurs by slowly acquired reputation for keenness of logic and soundness of argument. The first record we have of his parliamentary activity was on the 9th of June, 1737, when the House discussed the manner of dealing with the case of Captain Porteous, the unpopular commandant who had been murdered by a mob in Edinburgh. Speaking in favour of a motion to impose heavy penalties upon the offending city, Fox asserted his belief that the House was unanimous in abhorring both the principles and

²⁵ *London Magazine* for 1741, pp. 257-8.

²⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1733, p. 100; *London Magazine* for 1733, p. 98. Mrs. Fox was a niece of Mrs. Charlotte Dyves Clayton, afterwards Viscountess Sundon, one of the leading figures in the society and politics of the Court during the lifetime of Queen Caroline. The aunt seems to have been intimate not only with Walpole but with his leading henchman, Lord Hervey (see Thomson, *Memoirs of Viscountess Sundon*, II, chaps. ix and xi), which may account for the beginning of his acquaintance with Fox.

the persons concerned in the outrage, and maintained that it was the duty as well as to the interest of every gentleman present to bring to justice not only the criminals directly concerned, but those whose neglect had facilitated the outrage. He scouted as absurd the notion that dwellers in the adjacent country could have come in and perpetrated so open a crime without detection; and concluded by warning the House against the probable effects of slackness of authority—particularly in a country liable to rebellion.²⁷

On January 4, 1738, Fox moved the address in the Commons, with an eloquent tribute to the late Queen;²⁸ and during the same session he distinguished himself by defending the Administration when the enemies of Walpole, in spite of the anticipation of war, sought to reduce the army from 17,000 to 14,000 men.²⁹ Indeed no one with common sense could have reasonably done otherwise. It was Pitt and other demagogues of the Opposition who, after trying to bring on a war, were yet willing to imperil their country's success therein, if only the Minister they hated could be driven to quit his office. Thus Fox was resisting one of the most selfish and contemptible efforts in the history of English politics. It is needless to

²⁷ *Parliamentary History*, X. 302–5. A good brief account of the Porteous outrage is given by Mr. Leadam, *Pol. Hist. Eng.* (ed. Hunt and Poole), IX. 352. The city guard had been deprived of their arms by the plotters, and the onlookers were tacit accomplices in the outrage.

²⁸ *Ibid.* X. 367–8.

²⁹ *Ibid.* X. 407–14.

depict him as a patriot. He was simply a sensible man and a loyal adherent of Walpole.

Both on the question of raising a body of marines³⁰ and on that of augmenting the army³¹ Fox showed his practical reasoning powers; and on the former occasion he reprehended the growth of animosities, which he saw only too plainly were shattering the First Minister's supremacy. But that which we note with particular interest—though we have only the bare mention—is the fact that on March 8, 1739, Fox was roused to defend the recent convention with Spain³² from the 'abusive' attacks of William Pitt.³³ It was but natural that the loyal adherent of the Ministry should in time cross swords with his old school-fellow, whose loss of a cornetcy, as a punishment from Walpole, had rankled unceasingly in his ambitious mind. In the present case Fox was again standing for common sense against demagogism.³⁴

³⁰ *Parliamentary History*, XI. 164–8.

³¹ *Ibid.* XI. 976–8.

³² Walpole's diplomatic solution for avoiding hostilities with Spain. It was approved by a majority of thirty-seven, but could not well become operative owing to the nation's increasing ardour for war.

³³ Selwyn to Townshend, March 10, 1739: Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*, III. 519. Pitt's speech may be found in *Parliamentary History*, X. 1240.

³⁴ See von Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham* (Eng. trans.), I. 160. From *A Collection of the Parliamentary Debates in England* (printed in 1740), XV. 439, it would seem as though Fox and Pitt had come into collision on February 3 of that year. In other words, according to the arrangement of the

Participating in various measures, important and otherwise, Fox uniformly and unflinchingly supported the man to whom he owed his start in the world of politics. Not only did he refuse to side with the majority of leaders when Walpole's power was steadily declining, but he continued his defence of the great Minister long after the latter's fall. On the 9th of March, 1742, when an inquiry was moved into Walpole's administration for the past twenty years, Fox showed his adeptness for picking flaws in the arguments of the Opposition. After deploring the revival of old animosities at a time when union was so sadly needed, he proceeded to expose the weakness of the charges. Any appropriation of the public funds for corrupting the members of the House he admitted to be criminal; but the logic of the Opposition, as a means of proving the charge, was somewhat in this wise: the measures of the Administration have been criminal, and therefore Parliament must have been corrupt to have passed them. If such ground were to be taken, it would be going back

speeches in that collection, Fox would appear to have replied to Pitt in the course of the debate on the attempted reduction of the army, distinctly indicating him by the words 'the gentleman who spoke last except one'. But a reading of the two speeches plainly shows this to be an error; and we find it corrected in the Cobham compilation (*Parliamentary History*, X. 417-23), Fox's speech being inserted to precede Pitt's; while the words, 'one gentleman' are substituted for 'the gentleman who spoke last except one'. This arrangement makes Fox reply to the Tory leader, Shippen, and it is very clear that it is the latter's arguments that he refutes.

over the disputes of years. The assertion that corruption existed because members did not represent the feelings of their respective constituencies Fox considered far from having been proved. He was certain that electors were not intimidated by 'the dregs of people', as had been the case in the excise dispute of 1733, and he felt convinced that 'the better sort' were in control—'men of fortune and understanding'. He concluded by cautioning the House against anything that might exert a harmful influence on foreign relations, involving, as it naturally would, the disclosure of diplomatic secrets.³⁵

On the 10th of December—nearly nine months after the fall of Walpole—took place the second bout between the two future rivals of the Lower House. The question being that of the advisability of taking Hanoverians into British pay, Fox brought up as an argument the superiority of the Hanoverians over the more typical mercenaries. The former, he asserted, being under the same ruler as Englishmen themselves, were therefore most unlikely to regard exclusively their own particular interests. He would vote for the measure, he said, till better were proposed. Pitt replied that the Administration would soon lose its 'ablest defender', inasmuch as the present measures were so weak that scarce any alteration could be of advantage to the nation.³⁶

³⁵ *Parliamentary History*, XII. 461–6.

³⁶ *Ibid.* XII. 1030–3. The compliment to Fox's abilities

Pitt's retort was but an indication of what might take place between two ambitions ranged on opposite sides. A year later we find a more noteworthy encounter. When, in December 1743, the customary motion was made to address the King in reply to his speech, Pitt embraced the opportunity to deliver a furious philippic against the Carteret Administration. After inveighing against the policy of Carteret and the conduct of the war, he turned upon the Pelhams and depicted them (though with less censure) as the subservient instruments of an obnoxious favourite. Then came out the intemperate proposal to omit the address altogether—as a blow, not at the sovereign, but at the sovereign's advisers. 'If we put a negative upon this question,' he declared, 'it may awaken our Ministers out of their deceitful dream. If we agree to it, they will dream on till they have dreamed Europe and their country as well as themselves into perdition. If we stop now, the nation may recover; but if by such a flattering address we encourage them to go on, it may soon become impossible either for them or us to retreat; and therefore,' he concluded, 'for the sake of Europe as well as my country, I shall most heartily join in putting a negative upon this question.'³⁷

deserves notice. As for the rest, Pitt probably meant that nothing could be of benefit to the nation till all the old measures were repealed and new ones substituted.

³⁷ See Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 117-8; Almon, *Speeches and Anecdotes of Pitt*, I. 68 *et seq.* The last-named authority gives Pitt's eloquent though unreasonable tirade

Fox was among the first to repel the insult to the Crown and the Administration. 'The present debate,' he exclaimed, 'is such a one as I never was witness to in this House before, and hope I never shall again. It is not a debate as usual about the form of our address . . . The question must be whether we shall return any or no address by way of answer to the most gracious speech His Majesty has been pleased to make us from the throne. And will any gentleman so far violate his duty to his sovereign as to give a negative to such a question? In most questions I must confess I am well enough satisfied with seeing a majority upon what I think the right side . . . but upon this question . . . I should be sorry to see one contradictory vote.' He showed at length the extreme impropriety of such a proposal, and after indulging in a vigorous defence of the Ministry, he declared that the omission of an address would evince such disrespect toward His Majesty as would certainly lead to a rupture between King and Parliament, and might end in civil war. At least they should have the 'common decency' to amend the address rather than omit it altogether.³⁸

against Carteret. Coxe's account is taken from *Parliamentary History*, XIII. 152-70.

³⁸ *Parliamentary History*, XIII. 206-18. The practice of holding the Ministers responsible for the contents of the royal speech, which they themselves had written, had not yet been sanctioned by custom. The speeches were still ostensibly the King's work. Hence the odium which Wilkes incurred during the next reign.

The grave remonstrance of Fox was sufficient to restrain the Commons from an unpardonable step. The man who had bowed to his impulse was characteristically relying on the force of ridicule rather than reasoning. Pitt, as Walpole says, spoke to the passions; Fox, to the understanding. It was Fox whose head was clearer; and yet those very powers of reasoning were too often tinged with cynicism, and his finest mental qualities were clouded, as were Pitt's, by the forces of self-interest. Pitt, on his side, was impulsive and impolitic. It was hardly strange that the Pelhams should have hesitated to employ him; ³⁹ for the force of eloquence could burn deep, and it was not pleasant even to be singed by it.

It is a curious anomaly that Fox was defending the measures of the men who had overthrown his patron, whereas Pitt, one of the insurrectionists, was no longer acting with his fellows. Doubtless the latter's stand was the outcome of neglect. Dropped by his confederates after Walpole's fall, he had also incurred the hatred of the King for his slighting remarks upon Hanover; ⁴⁰ and together the two

³⁹ Orford's weight with the new Ministers, however, was sufficient to exclude the 'Boy Patriots' (as Pitt and his friends were derisively called). Moreover, the Prince, whose favour Orford had succeeded in obtaining, was only too easily persuaded to sacrifice his following.

⁴⁰ Pitt's unbridled attacks upon Walpole and Carteret led him naturally, and perhaps unintentionally, into the habit of giving offence to the King. On one occasion he treated Dettingen (in which the King had taken a conspicuous part) more as

misfortunes may well have seemed to the desperate man an almost impenetrable barrier. But the motives of his rival are less easy to ascertain. Whether Fox had early attached himself to Pelham as an avowed follower of the late Minister, or was counselled by Orford himself to avoid the snares of Opposition, does not readily appear. Probably he looked upon Pelham as the natural heir of the great Minister's parliamentary overlordship, and we know that his late patron had commended him to Pelham in most emphatic terms.⁴¹ Now in the same month his reward came in the shape of a seat at the Treasury Board.

Pitt, as one may surmise, was still unappreciated. The only other promotion of note was the appointment of Winnington, a friend of Fox, to the vacant post of Paymaster-General. The different shades of opposition to Carteret were so complex that the new First Commissioner was forced to defer his ministry-building till the Secretaries had fought their combat to a finish.

Meanwhile Fox had considerably enhanced his political fortunes by advancing his social status. Having fallen in love with the eldest daughter of

an escape than as a victory ; on another he intimated that His Majesty was a breaker of treaties ; while his favourite pastime was rousing national sentiment against Hanover, which he once spoke of as a ' baneful little electorate '. Thus Pitt's impulsiveness during this period was responsible for one of the costliest blunders of his career.

⁴¹ Page 27.

the Duke of Richmond,⁴² he had courted her with all the zeal and confidence that was characteristic of the man. Georgiana Caroline Lennox was great-granddaughter of Charles II by Fox's old benefactress, the Duchess of Portsmouth, and the high social standing of her father, as well as her own personal beauty and charm, made Lady Caroline an exceptionally desirable match. It was therefore hardly strange that a young plebeian, only on the threshold of political prominence, was considered wholly beneath the notice of the Lennoxes. As it happened, another suitor had been already granted the parental blessing.

But royal blood and ducal pride had small weight with the resolute young lady; and fearing the result of a promised interview with her dreaded suitor, Lady Caroline had her eyebrows shaved to ensure his defeat, and forthwith eloped with Henry Fox. The marriage took place on the 2nd of May, 1744, in the house of the bridegroom's friend, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams.⁴³

The anger of the parents is easy to imagine. Not only were the Foxes positively refused forgiveness, but friends and relatives of the young couple were required to prove their innocence of all com-

⁴² Master of the Horse, and consequently a titular member of the Cabinet. He was a close friend of both the Pelhams.

⁴³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, XIV. 281; Trevelyan, *Early History of C. J. Fox*, p. 9. Lady Caroline was born April 26, 1723, so she was more than seventeen years younger than her husband.

plicity.⁴⁴ But the tongues of the outside world were not so easily silenced ; and the affair was bruited abroad with a noise almost suggestive of a political convulsion. Not even the Cabinet was immune. Lord Granville, having received a special emissary from Newcastle with the story, remarked, ' I thought our fleets or armies were beat, or Mons betrayed into the hands of the French. At last it came out that Harry Fox was married, which I knew before. . . . This was what he was concerned about. Two people, to neither of whom he was related, were married against their parents' consent. And this man is Secretary of State ! ' ⁴⁵

The Pelhams were, in very truth, sorely perplexed. If they shrank from losing the favour of the Master of Horse, of equal value was the assistance of his son-in-law in the Commons. But at first they affected a dignified disapproval. Newcastle, a close friend of Richmond, spoke of the marriage as ' a most unfortunate affair ', and Pelham, though deeply attached to Fox, dropped the familiarity of ' Dear Harry ' and commenced his letters with ' Dear Sir ' for several months. His sister, on the other hand, showed a much

⁴⁴ ' I could tell you more,' wrote Sir Charles to his bosom friend. ' They are very angry with the Duke of Marlborough and me, I was spoke to about it and said whatever I had done was in consequence of our friendship, which was the chief thing in all the world I was proudest of. And that nothing would ever make me repent doing what you desired me, because you could not ask me to do anything wrong.'—Liechtenstein, I. 60.

⁴⁵ Williams to Fox, May 15, 1744: Ibid. I. 63.

broader spirit. Having positively declined to give up her friendship for the young bride, she went so far as to declare that if Lord Ilchester had been in his brother's place, they 'would have jumped at the match'; and where was the difference?⁴⁶

No doubt the dignified reserve of the young offenders themselves, as well as the independence and partiality of some of their friends, did much to assuage the parents' resentment; but a hardly less cogent motive was the valued support of Fox to the Administration, and his growing reputation as a party orator. A few lines from the pen of Chesterfield put the matter very clearly, 'Their Graces,' wrote His Lordship, 'are at their own motion reconciled to Fox and Lady Caroline. They were aware, I believe, that in case of any changes Fox stood foremost, and thereupon thought it right to take him in time, and not to stay till the view of interest was too strongly marked.'⁴⁷ Yet this letter was written in 1748, and more than four years had elapsed before they could bring themselves to pardon the offending pair. It was not until May of that year that Lady Caroline received a formal letter (signed by both parents) restoring her to the family affections and consenting to accept the son-in-law.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Most of these details are given us by Williams in a letter to Fox, May 15, 1744: *Ibid.* I. 62.

⁴⁷ Chesterfield to Stanhope, April 8, 1748: *Correspondence of Chesterfield* (ed. Bradshaw), II. 862.

⁴⁸ The Duke and Duchess of Richmond to Lady Caroline Fox, May 26, 1748: *Liechtenstein*, I. 68.

When at length the position of Lord Granville had ceased to be a question or an obstruction, Pelham was free to begin weaving his variegated pattern of an administration. After a conference with some of the leading malcontents (notably Lords Cobham, Gower and Chesterfield) a useful reinforcement was gained by the Ministry and several changes were effected. The Seals, wrested from Granville, were given back to Harrington, a personal friend of the First Lord; while Gower, whose Toryism was growing cold, was glad to resume the Privy Seal (which he had some time ago resigned out of loyalty to his party). Some distrust was manifested at the selection of the Duke of Bedford to preside at the Admiralty;⁴⁹ but his recent opposition to Walpole, his debating qualities in the Upper House, and, more than all, his by no means insignificant parliamentary *clientèle* made him too valuable a recruit to omit; besides this, his elevation brought in his friend the Earl of Sandwich to serve under him at the board, and the latter's industry and breadth of intelligence were as well recognized as his laxity of morals. But the most decisive victory for the Ministry was the nomination of Chesterfield, a cousin of Harrington, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in the teeth of the

⁴⁹ 'Vain, proud and wrong-headed,' wrote Richmond, 'I fear you will have a great deal of plague with him.'—Richmond to Newcastle, December 11, 1754, or Brit. Mus. Add. MSS., 32703, f. 464. Bedford was a man of noble lineage and great wealth. He had been one of the most strenuous opponents of Walpole in the House of Lords.

King's personal dislike. It was the second great triumph of the Pelhams over their sovereign.⁵⁰

But for Pitt nothing was yet found. The Pelhams—in consequence of Cobham's solicitations—were ready to promise him the post of Secretary-at-War, which he seems to have coveted, but unluckily this appointment the King positively refused to sanction, and the brothers ceased to importune him,⁵¹ probably because one triumph was deemed enough for the present.

In the Cabinet the Pelhams had no one to fear but each other. Shortly after their accession to power Newcastle had disclosed to their common friend the Chancellor how greatly he envied the position which Pelham held by virtue of his office at the Treasury. His brother, he complained to Hardwicke, had been taught by his predecessor that he, like Orford himself, must be First Minister in everything. Greater influence in Cabinet and Commons were 'indeed (he admitted) great advantages', and yet they 'may be counterbalanced, especially if it is considered *over whom* these advantages are given'.⁵² Goaded perhaps by the coldness of the King, who knew whence had come

⁵⁰ Chesterfield, it will be remembered, was one of the Prince of Wales's faction, and had consequently been instrumental in exciting the opposition to Walpole. Like Pitt, he had infuriated the King by speaking contemptuously of Hanover. But his present appointment well exemplified the desire of the Pelhams to construct a 'broad-bottomed' administration.

⁵¹ Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 197.

⁵² Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 7, 1743.

the blow that felled his favourite, and pleading as an excuse the disfavour he scented among his colleagues, the Duke gently insisted that his brother should allow him an equal share of his ministerial power, and that they should 'have no reserve either public or private from each other'.⁵³ Pelham apparently acquiesced in the scheme of partnership, little realizing perhaps how thoroughly he was, and would be, swayed by his elder brother.

In foreign affairs there was little or no deviation from the broad outlines of Granville's policy. Secretary Newcastle took care to forget that he had ever frowned upon a policy of subsidies, and the Pelhams were prompt in renewing the bounty to the Empress-Queen.⁵⁴ But in the war itself Fortune had seldom been more fickle. Everything seemed to turn upon the conduct of Frederick of Prussia, whose military prowess and diplomatic unscrupulousness kept Europe in ceaseless turmoil. Yet it must be noticed that British victories had for a time become less and less frequent. The

⁵³ Newcastle to Pelham, January 19, 1745: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 205.

⁵⁴ In January 1745 a quadruple alliance was formed of England, Holland, Austria and Saxony. Thus a subsidy was planned for Saxony as well. Formerly Newcastle had been much opposed to the King's inclination to subsidize Saxony; but that was when Carteret was directing the Government's policy, and politics furnished the motive. For Newcastle's and Hardwicke's views at that time see Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 163-5.

vengeance of the elements rather than any atom of skill on the part of the Channel Fleet defeated an attempt of the French to invade England ; and in the Mediterranean a more noticeable case of mismanagement occurred. A squadron under Admiral Mathews having encountered a Franco-Spanish fleet off Toulon, was prevented from winning a decisive victory by the refusal of Vice-Admiral Lestock, the second-in-command, to obey the signals for engaging the enemy. The next day, when a pursuit of the shattered allies was ordered, it was Lestock who might have retrieved the lost opportunity, but for the conduct of his superior, who unaccountably ordered the fleet to retire. The miscarriage seems to have been occasioned by a deadly feud between the two commanders, which rendered co-operation impossible.

Mathews, whose responsibility, as superior officer, was the greater, having suspended Lestock, was recalled to support his charges against him ; and the two men carried on a somewhat heated correspondence of 'queries and answers',⁵⁵ while Lestock was suffering an irksome delay pending arrangements for the trial he had solicited.

The difficult question came up before the Commons in the spring session of 1745, and it was moved that the House should resolve itself into a committee of inquiry into the miscarriage in

⁵⁵ These are printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1744, pp. 545-51.

question.⁵⁶ So much feeling was shown by the supporters of both the offenders that witnesses were summoned from far and near. After evidence had been collected and discussed for several days, and finally closed, each of the principals having been heard in his own defence, Fox rose to plead the cause of Lestock.

He began by taking exception to two features of the Admiral's conduct subsequent to the miscarriage. First, he had sent Lestock home without any specific charge (for the 'queries and answers' could not properly be called one) and without a single witness to support such a measure; secondly, though he had reached England in September and must have known that Lestock was pressing day and night for a trial, yet when, by discretion of the Admiralty, he was requested to present his charge and a list of witnesses, he let seven weeks elapse before he answered the letter; and when he did finally write, he excused his delay on the pretence that his papers were mislaid — 'an odd excuse for one who had been so eager to raise a clamour against the Vice-Admiral, and lay the whole odium upon him, when others were

⁵⁶ Pelham at first opposed the motion on the ground that the committee would not have the requisite authority to judge the case; but finding the current of opinion against him, and conscious of the force of public clamour for a judgement of the question, he reluctantly yielded, and the resolution was passed.—Tindal, *Translation and Continuation of Rapin's History of Eng.*, XXI. 43.

equally guilty, and to exercise the highest act of authority over a man grown decrepit in the service.' Fox concluded by hoping that his judgement had been impartial during the inquiry, but that the Admiral had yet to prove that his conduct was consistent with humanity and justice.

Mathews then replied that, for an 'impartial speech', Fox's was the 'severest he had ever heard'. He expressed his opinion that the facts in the 'queries' did constitute a charge, and protested that the witnesses could not be readily withdrawn from the King's service; and, furthermore, it was quite true that his papers had been delayed at sea. The tardiness of his letter to the Admiralty he did not explain.

On the 9th, George Grenville, a friend of Pitt, and a man whose abilities were ripening with experience, suggested that the evidence should be drawn up and presented to the King, to the intent that those should be tried whom His Majesty should name (there being several minor officers under suspicion as well). Then, as a preliminary to the fulfilment of that suggestion, he moved three resolutions, the import of which was that there had been miscarriages of which certain persons were guilty. These were passed.

Fox, however, expressed disapproval of Grenville's unspecific representations, particularly as witnesses were ready to throw all blame upon Lestock, leaving Mathews unscathed; and if, moreover, the

evidence were to be published, they would have timidity as an additional motive for hiding the truth. He, for his part, desired a general address, requesting a court-martial to judge those whom the committee should specifically name. Pelham agreed in the main with Grenville, and Winnington with Fox.

The following day Fox moved his resolution for an address to the King, requesting a court-martial to be held upon the admirals and several subordinate officers. An amendment was then offered by a member named Vyner, and supported by Pelham, that Mathews's name should be struck from the list. This occasioned a warm opposition from Fox and his supporters, among whom were Grenville and William Murray, the Solicitor-General. Fox, in particular, contended that however conclusively Mathews had proved his valour, he was unquestionably responsible for the gross laxity of discipline in his squadron, and guilty of strange contrariety of conduct on his own part. It was, therefore, unfair, he repeated, to fling all the blame upon the second-in-command. Vyner's amendment was buried under an adverse majority of 133, and Fox's resolution was then passed.

The King accepted the plea, and a long and tedious court-martial was held. In the end, Lestock, whose defence had rested mainly on technicalities regarding signals, was honourably acquitted, while Mathews, against whom counter-

charges had been preferred, was declared incapable of serving His Majesty in future.⁵⁷

Fox's conduct throughout the inquiry was described as 'much to his credit',⁵⁸ and the ultimate outcome was certainly due largely to his efforts. He appears to have been a personal friend of Lestock, who left him a token of gratitude in his will.⁵⁹

The war had, in the meantime, taken a sudden turn by the spirited defence on the part of the French against a threatened invasion of their own land. England, from her nearness to the field of operations, was naturally looked to for leadership among the Allies, and in December the King's younger son, the Duke of Cumberland, had been selected to command the army of the invaders. The appointment might well be open to question,⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Our chief authority for the discussion in the Commons is *Parliamentary History*, XIII. 1250-99. Further evidence is given in Tindal. It is only necessary to add here that so complete a reversal in the relative situations of the two admirals was grossly unfair, for Mathews was much the better officer. But technicalities convicted Mathews as truly as they had acquitted Lestock. As was characteristic of the time, the two courts-martial clung to a literal interpretation of the law instead of passing judgement in a liberal spirit. See *Royal Naval History* (ed. Clowes, 1898), III. 105-6.

⁵⁸ This was stated by Philip Yorke (afterward Lord Royston) in his *Parliamentary Journal*. 'Henry Fox,' writes Walpole, 'has gained the greatest honour by his assiduity and capacity in the affair.'—Walpole to Mann, April 15, 1745: *Letters of Horace Walpole* (ed. Toynbee), II. 83.

⁵⁹ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, XXIII. 115.

⁶⁰ The Duke was only in his twenty-fifth year, and had had

and certainly won no justification by its result. The momentous reverse at Fontenoy marked another turning-point in the war; for the victors, assisted by the paucity of the Allies' troops, swept through the Low Countries with scarce a check.

But the Administration was to have a still harder problem to face. Scarcely had it digested the mortification of Fontenoy, when a blow long suspected and longer feared was directed against the reigning dynasty. Unassisted by the French Court and without its immediate knowledge, the Young Pretender successfully landed in Scotland and gathered a small but determined following. The invasion which followed and its initial success were quite sufficient to create consternation; and the alarm—especially in Government circles—was appalling. Fox, writing to Hanbury Williams, had early betrayed his forebodings: 'The rebels are got twenty-four miles on this side Cope, and are in full march to Edinburgh, or still farther

but a slight apprenticeship to arms. The probable reason for the appointment was that the King wanted it for himself, and opposed the choice of Cumberland on that account.—Stone to Newcastle, February 16, 1745: Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32704, f. 72. The Ministry were naturally indisposed to have the King leave the country while the terrors of Jacobitism were still so rife, and felt, perhaps, that the appointment of Cumberland would be likely to offend him less than any other selection for the command; while the Duke's valour at Dettingen would serve as the pretext. But the choice of Cumberland for such a crucial enterprise must ever remain one of the gravest blunders of the Pelham Administration.

south. . . . England, Wade ⁶¹ says, and I believe, is for the first comer ; and if you can tell whether the six thousand Dutch and the ten battalions of English, or five thousand French or Spaniards, will be here first, you know our fate.' ⁶²

The Cabinet and War Office were given a difficult problem that needed instantaneous solving ; it was the problem of defending a country that was civilian by tradition and unprepared through stress of circumstances. Dutch troops had been summoned in accordance with an old treaty stipulation, and ten battalions were called from the English army in Flanders, narrowly escaping annihilation before they sailed ; ⁶³ but the apathy of the English people in general was one of the deepest stains upon a proud and patriotic nation. ⁶⁴ If rural communities and commercial centres cared so little that the grandson of James II was winning victories against a government that revolution had made free, how was it any wonder that politics were decadent and statesmen thought of little but themselves !

Since the tiny force under General Cope seemed for a time the only available strength, thirteen lords volunteered to raise regiments for the national cause. But the offer, unfortunately, was not so

⁶¹ Field-Marshal, and Commander-in-chief until Cumberland succeeded him.

⁶² Coxe, *Memoirs of Lord Walpole*, p. 284.

⁶³ See Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, II. 132.

⁶⁴ See Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, I. 421, 468.

generous or so effective as at first appeared. Walpole sums up the matter succinctly: 'Had they paid them too, the service would have been noble; being paid by the Government obscured a little of the merit—paid without raising them would deserve too coarse a term. It is certain that not six of the thirteen regiments were ever raised, not four were employed. . . . The chief persons at the head of the scheme were the Dukes of Bedford and Montagu.'

The status of the proposed troops was naturally submitted to considerable and caustic criticism; for the obligation was liable to be much emphasized, and the noble benefactors insisted on their own terms. 'Fox,' writes Walpole, 'was hotly opposed to the plan, especially the design of giving rank to the officers,'⁶⁵ for the noble colonels had appointed their dependants and relatives to serve on a par with veterans of many years' standing. Encouraged by the reluctance of the King in the matter, Fox and Winnington, in combination with Jacobite Tories, attempted to defeat it in the Lower House; and the former took occasion to inveigh particularly against the Duke of Montagu.

Pitt, on the other hand, defended the regiments warmly, wishing, it was said, to curry favour with Bedford, Gower and Halifax, three peers who were instrumental in the enterprise. More probably it was Pelham who had influenced his action.

⁶⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II* (ed. Holland), I. 446-7.

At all events, since Pelham, as representative of the Administration, now added his own support, the colonels were easily able to triumph over the terrors of the Jacobites and the shrewd scepticism of Fox.⁶⁶ The Prince of Wales expressed his feelings by drinking Fox's health in a bumper with three huzzas for opposing the First Lord.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, the Dutch troops having been recalled, Hessians were summoned in their stead; while the force from Flanders formed the nucleus of a promising host—to be entrusted to Cumberland, as fitting defender of his dynasty. In addition the Ministry decided in February to continue the noble regiments whose term had lately expired, and utilize their services for four months longer. This at once caused Fox to renew his opposition, and he strove to persuade the House to postpone decision, on the ground that the invaders were checked and the expense unnecessary; and though defeated by the Ministry's majority, his satisfaction must have been great when tidings of the rebels' plight arrived soon afterwards with the additional news that Gower's regiment had mutinied upon hearing that their term of service was to be continued beyond

⁶⁶ Walpole to Mann, November 4, 1745: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 145. As before, in the case of Lestock, Fox was again in opposition to Pelham. In both cases he was probably acting according to his convictions, yet at the same time desirous of giving his chief a hint that if he was to be loyal to the Administration, it would be advisable to promote him.

⁶⁷ Walpole to Mann, November 15, 1745: *Letters*, II. 148.

the term for which they had enlisted.⁶⁸ Nor had the Pretender been beaten. Despite some initial success, Cumberland had met with a reverse in January at Falkirk.

In the midst of the dangers that beset the tottering throne, a revolution in the Administration threatened to tear away the last vestige of executive energy. Although Granville was no longer officially a member of the governing circle, the Pelhams had long been suspicious of the influence and favour he still maintained at Kensington. Nor was distrust abated by the persistent indifference with which the King treated his Ministers; and even Pelham himself, less naturally suspicious than his brother, was forced finally to realize the weakness of their position. Sombre whisperings in the Closet might with dignity be overlooked, but the total lack of sympathy with his conduct of the war was fast becoming unbearable. Even his necessary measures of defence met with the utmost disdain. Granville censured the despatching of the English battalions, and Tweeddale, Secretary of State for Scotland,⁶⁹ treated the alleged dangers with unqualified contempt.⁷⁰ The one balm for the wounded First Lord would have been the acquisition of Pitt (now the ally of the Ministry);

⁶⁸ Walpole to Mann, September 5, 1745: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 171.

⁶⁹ This office (which had customarily commanded a seat in the Cabinet) was abolished in January, 1746.

⁷⁰ Fox to Williams, September 5, 1745: Coxe, *Memoirs of Lord Walpole*, p. 284.

but this proposal the King steadfastly negatived.⁷¹ It was hence that the Pelhams determined to take advantage of the crisis, and force upon him the concessions which they wanted.

The conflagration, so long smouldering, had needed only the gusts of Jacobite rebellion to make it burst forth in all its fury. Weary of the dictation of Ministers whom he hated, and driven perforce into a choice of two alternatives (concession or resistance), the King at length prevailed upon Bath and Granville to attempt the forming of a new administration.⁷² Obviously the

⁷¹ Another attempt had been made on the 5th of February to induce the King to relent and make Pitt Secretary-at-War; but His Majesty flatly refused to consider the proposition, and in this resolution Bath encouraged him. It appears that the Ministry then made a show of giving up the point (Coxe, *Pelham*, I. 290), but after they had decided to threaten resignation, they entered into a much closer union with Pitt and his friends. This treaty (*Anecdotes of Chatham*, I. 108-9) was made on the 9th, and the evening of the same day the King was again importuned—and again without success. On the following day Harrington resigned—the first to do so, by pre-arrangement at the meeting of February 8, which we mention in the text (p. 64).

⁷² It would appear from Coxe's *Pelham Administration*, I. 288, that the King took the overt initiative in bringing about a rupture. Yet the fact remains clear that the Pelhams would have precipitated it in any event. Obviously their intention now was to anticipate their enemies by forcing them to make up a ministry before they were in any sense prepared to do so. Meanwhile they had but to await the King's expected failure in order to make good their recent promises to Pitt. Dr. von Ruville considers Pitt and his friends the most to blame of all the persons concerned, since they were evidently making use

test of their capacity for such a task would lie in their power to win immediate and effective assistance. The outlook was not extremely encouraging; and an effort to secure Harrington failed dismally.⁷³ A practical possibility was Chesterfield, although his absence in Ireland would incur dangerous delay.

But Henry Pelham had not moulded a 'broad-bottomed' administration in vain, and the time had arrived when the deftness of the builder should be realized. At a conference at the Chancellor's on the evening of the 8th, Newcastle, Harrington and the First Lord had concurred with Hardwicke in a resolution to resign, and two days later this was carried into effect. Others of the Ministry followed, till the wavering Chesterfield was almost alone.

Deserted during a great national crisis, the King may well have regretted his conspiracy; but his two lieutenants remained undaunted. On the next day Bath kissed hands for the Treasury, and the Seals were conferred upon Granville—one office for himself and one for whom he would. A few

of a national crisis in order to impose themselves upon the Government.—*William Pitt, Earl of Chatham* (Eng. trans.), I. 260–1. No doubt the Pelhams were very much afraid that Pitt, if not satisfied, would go over to the Opposition.

⁷³ On his way from a conference in the Closet on the 6th of February, Bath had met Harrington, to whom he remarked confidently, 'I have advised the King to negative the appointment of Mr. Pitt, and to pursue proper measures on the Continent.' 'Those who dictate in private,' coldly replied Harrington, 'should be employed in public.'—Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 289.

others accepted seats in the new Ministry, but more refused all assistance; and Winnington, importuned while in act of tendering his resignation, frankly told the ministry-makers that their cause was hopeless.⁷⁴ Granville, more bold than his associate, would have had the King appeal to the mercy of Parliament; ⁷⁵ but His Majesty saw only too clearly that the power of the Crown was hopeless to combat a party which itself controlled the Commons. As for Granville, it was the veteran's last effort to free his captive master and to gain back power for himself. In course of time he would become the servant of ministers but never again their rival.

Failure being acknowledged, the mediation of Winnington brought the First Lord and the Crown to an understanding, and the seceding Ministers returned to office. But the Pelhams were not willing to make of their victory a grateful accommodation. The King must see whence power was derived, and pay the penalty of his restlessness. And so it turned out that the Ministers declined to come back without Pitt as one of their colleagues.⁷⁶ It is true that their

⁷⁴ Diary of Lord Marchmont: *Marchmont Papers*, I. 174.

⁷⁵ *Memoirs of a Celebrated Character* (Richard Glover), p. 41.

⁷⁶ The Newcastle faction to the King, February 13, 1745: Add. MSS., 35870, f. 117. The successful stand of the Pelhams on this point, and still more the King's inability to supplant them by a new Ministry, are clear and interesting evidences of the strides which cabinet government had taken under Walpole's long ascendancy.

protégé had sought to obliterate the impressions created by his wounded pride and accordingly renounced his ambition for the War Office;⁷⁷ but his recent support of the regiments, and especially his resistance to a measure attacking corruption,⁷⁸ were services too valuable to go entirely unrewarded—and the more so when they reflected that Pitt, when snubbed or flouted, was a dangerous man to deal with. And so with tearful eyes the defeated monarch was forced to sanction his appointment as Vice-Treasurer of Ireland—a lucrative position that might conveniently be occupied till better should be found.

Such was the last chapter of an episode which had begun and now ended with the ambition of William Pitt. It was not to the credit of any of the figures involved that the dynasty had weathered the storm. The whole affair shows plainly enough the pitiful want of patriotism in the politicians of that age.

Freed from back-stairs influence, the Ministry were now ready to meet the danger to the

⁷⁷ Newcastle to Chesterfield, February 18, 1746: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 292.

⁷⁸ The measure (presented by the Opposition) had attacked the exertion of illegal influence upon elections. Pitt pleaded that such a measure during a civil war was ill-timed.—Von Ruville, I. 257. So also, we might add, were his recent efforts to secure an office from the Ministry. Moreover, a national crisis had not deterred him from attacking corruption when it was carried on by Walpole. Evidently the evil appeared to him in a different light now that he was allied with the existing system and no longer its opponent.

royal house with more confidence in the issue ; and the end came late in April on the famous field of Culloden. But Cumberland refused to spare the beaten foe ; and at twenty-five the ruthless young Prince was hailed with the epithet of ' Butcher '—a not unmerited reward for his orgy of victory. The Ministry, however, thought only of their relief after a particularly trying crisis ; and Pitt proved so warm an advocate of a proposed pension to the Duke, that His Majesty expressed a wish that he should be the one to move the vote in the Commons.⁷⁹

Two days after the battle Fox lost his friend Winnington,⁸⁰ who had obstinately refused to see a competent physician till Fox's insistence had come too late to save him.⁸¹ The Paymaster was an odd but not unusual combination of good and bad. Horace Walpole called him the wittiest man he had ever known, while a careless disregard of morals underlay one of the keenest capacities for business that the Administration had found. The same love of revelry which characterized the less dissolute minds of Fox and Sir Hanbury Williams had knit them in a common bond with Winnington, and the three had long been boon-companions.

Some changes in the Ministry came as a con-

⁷⁹ The King's wish was not gratified, as Cumberland said he would be ' much better pleased if the Premier moved it '.—Cumberland to Newcastle, May 7, 1746 : Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32707, f. 149.

⁸⁰ April 18, 1746.

⁸¹ Walpole to Mann, April 25, 1746 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 189.

sequence of the new vacancy. Sir William Yonge, who had been Secretary-at-War since 1736, was an exceedingly able man, but ill-health had impaired his usefulness for departmental work, and the Ministers agreed that he must be removed. He was accordingly transferred to the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland, to succeed Pitt, whose fortune Winnington's death had so opportunely furthered. Besides being promoted to the Pay Office, the man who had 'alternately bullied and flattered Mr. Pelham',⁸² was given a seat in the Privy Council; it was all, and perhaps more than, he could have expected. The King is said to have shed tears of mortification, and Cobham, who felt keenly the termination of his old influence, denounced him as a 'wrong-headed fellow that he had no regard for'.⁸³

Meanwhile Fox, who had waited so long and so patiently for recognition of his faithful allegiance, was appointed Secretary-at-War, and a member of the Privy Council.⁸⁴ 'It is thought,' wrote Newcastle to Richmond, 'that as affairs now stand in the House of Commons, nobody but Mr. Fox can succeed Sir William Yonge;' ⁸⁵ and

⁸² Walpole to Mann, November 4, 1745: *ibid.* II. 145.

⁸³ Diary of Lord Marchmont: *Marchmont Papers*, I. 176. Cobham naturally resented the fact that Pitt, by allying himself closely with the Pelhams, had demonstrated that he had no further need of his former patron.

⁸⁴ *London Gazette*, no. 8,556.

⁸⁵ Newcastle to Richmond, May 6, 1746: Add. MSS., 32707, f. 149.

the injured father-in-law had to content himself with veiling his acquiescence under a protest against the Ministry's partiality.⁸⁶

Whether Pitt still coveted the place he had formerly demanded is more than we can tell. The biographer of Fox is tempted to regard this as one of the latter's early triumphs in that long rivalry.

The brothers at the helm were meanwhile as unharmonious as ever. Newcastle, clutching at the hope of regaining his lost favour in the Closet, supported the desire of the King and the Duke of Cumberland to prolong the war; while Pelham, on the contrary, was disheartened by the vast expense, which seemed to bring nothing but reverses in the field. Yet he lacked the force of character to insist upon a different policy, and his weakness was fast hastening the doom of Harrington, who, as he saw with regret, was being mystified and slighted.⁸⁷

But the First Lord and the Junior Secretary were not the only ones to feel the despotic spirit of Newcastle. The Duke of Bedford, ever since his elevation to the headship of the Admiralty, had been cogitating a scheme for the effectual expulsion of the French from their settlements on the

⁸⁶ Richmond to Newcastle, May 7, 1746: *ibid.*, f. 155.

⁸⁷ No doubt the report was true that Harrington's department (the North) was steadily encroached upon.—*Marchmont Papers*, I. 184. Newcastle affirmed that he had corresponded with Sandwich only in his private capacity (*Bedford Corres.* I. 171), but we can readily see the embarrassments which would result from such a practice.

St. Lawrence.⁸⁸ But whereas no positive objection seems to have been made (and some troops for the purpose were actually mobilized in Ireland), the project was apparently allowed to languish simply from want of Cabinet encouragement ; and before the end of the year (1746) the expedition, which Bedford had so carefully mapped out, was clearly and definitely abandoned.⁸⁹ Yet, abortive as the policy proved, it bore politically a two-fold importance. In the first place it gave Bedford a cause for lasting resentment against the colleague whose co-operation had been essential to his success ; and secondly, it marked the first conspicuous sign of the programme of that faction which would later come into play under the leadership of Cumberland. If the chiefs of the Administration took no interest in America, a party would gradually be formed, and gain the strength to force this issue. Meanwhile the hope of conquering Canada was put off for a decade, and the one British gain, the island of Cape Breton, was destined to be relinquished at the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.⁹⁰

All these marks of tyranny Pelham must have seen with biting chagrin. In October the differ-

⁸⁸ Joint representation of the Duke of Bedford and others to the Duke of Newcastle, March 30, 1746 : *Bedford Corres.* I. 65.

⁸⁹ Grenville to Bedford, December 1, 1746 : *ibid.* I. 199.

⁹⁰ It will be recalled that this was restored as the only means of inducing France to abandon her conquests in the Low Countries.

ences between the brothers became so acute that Pelham asked the Duke's secretary, Andrew Stone, to be the channel of all intercourse between them. Naturally all the Ministers were more or less involved in the matter. Harrington was staunch in his support of the First Lord; while Chesterfield, if we are to believe Fox, was 'more open and violent for peace than any of them'.⁹¹ Fox himself regarded a cessation of the war as absolutely imperative, and declared that Newcastle was the only one who frowned on peace except the Chancellor, Hardwicke, who sided with him 'to keep the governing of him'.⁹² Doubtless Fox was correct. Certainly the military situation was no less serious than he believed; for the army of the Maréchal de Saxe was steadily advancing, apparently to the destruction of Holland.

But great as were the dangers of his policy, Newcastle would brook no opposition to his despotism in the Cabinet, and, a pretext having arisen from the fraternal quarrel,⁹³ the one man who acknowledged Pelham as his mentor was forced to yield up his office. Chesterfield, much to the astonishment of the First Lord, who had not been consulted,⁹⁴ was appointed to succeed

⁹¹ Fox to Williams, December 28, 1746: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 342.

⁹² Diary of Lord Marchmont: *Marchmont Papers*, I. 231.

⁹³ Harrington had supported Pelham in one of the quarrels between the brothers on the subject of peace. Hence Newcastle insisted upon his dismissal.

⁹⁴ Fox writes that Pelham was much chagrined at the

Harrington, while the latter repaired to Ireland to fill his cousin's place. Thus the two Stanhopes were exchanged.

In the session of Parliament 1746–7 little of note took place. Fox as Secretary-at-War introduced the army estimates, and reported a reduction of expenses in the King's personal guard, for which the Commons voted an address of thanks to their sovereign.⁹⁵ Subsequently both Houses, at Newcastle's instance, passed the so-called Act of Grace for all concerned in the late rebellion.

In September 1747 Fox apparently suffered from an illness which rumour seems to have exaggerated. Barrington, an ambitious member of the Cobham faction, already imagined himself Secretary-at-War, and entrusted his candidature to George Grenville.⁹⁶ The fact, however, that Walpole, an intimate friend of Fox, makes no mention of it in his correspondence leads one strongly to doubt that Fox's life was at any time in danger.

Meanwhile Newcastle turned again to strike an opponent of his policy. It might have been predicted from the first by any one who knew the

downfall of Harrington, whom he had been hoping to save.—Fox to Williams, October 28, 1746. The First Lord frankly regarded him as the victim of Cabinet dissensions.—Pelham to Trevor, October 29, 1746: Coxe, I. 341.

⁹⁵ *Parliamentary History*, XIII. 1439.

⁹⁶ Barrington to Grenville, September 5, 1747: *Grenville Papers*, I. 68.

temper of the elder Pelham, that a man of Chesterfield's force and intelligence could not but become an object of jealousy to his colleague. His Lordship was not a cipher like most of the Cabinet, and having given Ireland a more than usually successful administration, he plumed himself on his ability to secure the long-desired peace.⁹⁷ The inevitable result followed. The new Secretary's department was steadily encroached upon,⁹⁸ and an effort to secure a favour through Fox and Lady Yarmouth (the King's mistress⁹⁹) made his colleague suspect a counter-influence in the Closet.¹⁰⁰ Other provo-

⁹⁷ We may certainly wonder with Fox (letter of October 28th) why Newcastle should have chosen not only one of the Stanhopes, but an outspoken advocate of peace. Chesterfield earnestly laboured to gain this object—partly through the agency of his friend Dayrolles, Ambassador at the Hague, and was consequently much annoyed by the coincident correspondence of Newcastle and Sandwich.—Ernst, *Memoirs of the Life of Chesterfield*, pp. 331–2.

⁹⁸ Fox to Williams, February 17, 1748: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 389.

⁹⁹ The King's mistress, the Countess of Yarmouth, was the one who best understood his moods, and in consequence she often played an intermediary rôle between the King and his Ministers. Her attitude was generally regarded as a fairly accurate barometer of the humour of the Closet.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.; Ernst, *Chesterfield*, pp. 331–2; *Marchmont Papers*, I. 226. Chesterfield's request was for a colonelcy for his cousin, George Stanhope, but he failed to obtain it. Certainly Newcastle was quite needlessly suspicious when he supposed that the King was influenced by a man he had always detested. Lord Marchmont writes that the Duke was 'so jealous of the Closet that he could not endure that any one should have credit there'.—Ibid. I. 261.

cations arose between the Secretaries, and finally, on February 6, 1747, Chesterfield tendered his resignation.

Who was now to succeed to the difficult position of colleague to the Duke of Newcastle? Three men had been virtually turned out because they proved themselves obstacles to tyranny, and the last two were certainly not picked for genius in diplomacy. Small wonder that the post was not assiduously sought.

The Duke himself (so Fox tells us) expressed a preference for Lord Sandwich,¹⁰¹ with whom he had become intimate in the diplomatic world, and whom he doubtless regarded as a devoted adherent. The other candidate, prominently mentioned though not himself seeking the honour, was the Secretary-at-War, who thus writes of it to his friend Williams: 'You will expect I should say something of myself, as having been so much named on this occasion. You will believe, that when Lord Chesterfield resigned, I felt with regard to the Seals as I shall with respect to the see of Winchester when that prelate dies. Indeed, I no more thought of the one than I did of the other. The Duke of Newcastle declared early he would name nobody; Mr. Pelham said the same. Hence standers-by named everybody, and amongst the rest, me. All Sandwich's enemies were my friends; or, to express it better than by the word enemies, those who wished him not to succeed, as it would

¹⁰¹ Fox to Williams, February 17, 1748.

be too strong a declaration in favour of the war-like system. Joined to these, who were numerous and of rank at court, the voice of the House of Commons was much in my favour, and of none more loudly than Lyttelton, Pitt, &c. I flatter myself that from personal affection, too, I had more active friends than I could have imagined, or is usual; and this has been a pleasure to me. On the other side, as I never had thoughts of it, or pretensions to it (though spirit enough to undertake it, if it came strangely in my way); as the execution of it might have been attended with great discredit to myself, and certainly with much uneasiness; and as the whole of this transaction has been such as leaves me the honour of being talked of for it, without the reproach of having pretended to what I could not attain, I am in my mind as easy as ever I was, and shall go on in my own track as cheerfully as ever, with as little thought as I had of being Secretary of State.’¹⁰²

There is little reason to suppose that Fox had aspired to succeed Lord Chesterfield, and there is certainly no evidence on record that he made any move in the affair. But the fact which is most significant—the fact which gave him justifiable pleasure—was the evident recognition that his abilities merited promotion. It was not without some cause that his name had been prominently mentioned for an office as important as the

¹⁰² Fox to Williams, February 17, 1748.

Secretaryship of State. 'Mr. Fox,' wrote Lord Anson, of the Admiralty Board, 'whose ability and credit in the House of Commons are great, will, in my private opinion, push both the brothers whenever he sees a fair opportunity ; for he does not want ambition, nor any qualities that are necessary to raise a man in this country to the height of power.'¹⁰³ Such expressions are pretty high praise ; nor are they from the pen of a political friend. Presumably we may regard them as correctly denoting his reputation. Surely Fox himself was not so unduly modest as to fail to appreciate his value to the Ministry. He had already 'pushed' them once when he became Secretary-at-War. If he showed no desire to mount higher at present, it was probably because he felt that ambition would be better satisfied if he waited till he could acquire such political strength as would render him practically independent of the Pelhams. To have become the colleague of Newcastle without the means of restraining Pelham when his brother played the tyrant would have been politically suicidal. The downfall of Carteret was not without its lesson.

If Pelham's opinion had had its proper value, there is reason to believe that his friend Fox would have been nominated to the post, arduous and hazardous as it was. Not that the latter would have possessed added weight in the Commons, but because he might be reasonably reckoned

¹⁰³ Barrow, *Life of Anson*, p. 199.

upon to represent the views of Pelham and exert a restraining influence against his brother's monopoly of foreign policy. His past career gave him reputation for an energetic spirit combined with a politician's tact. There was hope that such a man might be able to serve with Newcastle and yet win some renown.

But if Pelham was unconsulted, Newcastle was foiled. With the probable intention of soothing Bedford for the disappointment he had suffered in his colonial scheme, Newcastle hinted that the Duke should be offered the Seals, expecting beyond a doubt that he would decline the offer in favour of Sandwich. But in this the ducal schemer miscalculated, and Bedford accepted the proffered offer—to serve, as he said, for six months.¹⁰⁴ In that statement one may perhaps discern the refuge of one who knew the Duke of Newcastle.

It would be tedious and unnecessary here to enumerate the several steps by which the protracted war was eventually brought to an end and peace concluded. Overtures had come from the French side as early as June 1746; but a dispute having arisen between the envoys concerned in the negotiation, hostilities were again renewed, and fraught with the same disasters to the Allies. Finally, in August 1747, Saxe again signified his willingness for peace, and suggested a conference with the Duke of Cumberland to that

¹⁰⁴ Fox to Williams, February 17, 1748.

end. Pelham did not disapprove the choice, but Newcastle seems to have distrusted the Duke's capacity,¹⁰⁵ and, as usual, carried the Cabinet with him.

By a compromise the Duke was allowed nominally to head the mission, while the active work was put in the hands of his friend, Sandwich, who departed under a load of troublesome instructions. A congress having been arranged at Aix-la-Chapelle, the preliminaries of peace were signed April 30, 1748, and after much bickering among the Allies the definitive treaty was concluded, October 18.

In all this struggle on the subject of peace, Fox and Pitt were officially unconcerned. While their positions respectively were nearly on a par, they could scarcely be considered to hold more than subordinate offices, neither of which was accompanied by a seat in the Cabinet. Fox, as we have seen, went so far as privately to urge the cessation of hostilities; but Pitt—naturally the more outspoken of the two—seems to have trusted in silence as the better device. Shortly after the signing of the treaty, Fox atoned for his past criticism of Newcastle by writing a letter to the Duke in which he praised both the treaty and the Duke's share therein;¹⁰⁶ and Newcastle (then at

¹⁰⁵ Not without reason. The Duke of Cumberland had had no experience in diplomacy, and it was doubtful if he possessed the temper necessary for so delicate a task.

¹⁰⁶ Fox to Newcastle, November 15, 1748: Add. MSS., 32717, f. 198. A month before Fox had sent a few lines of congratulation.—Ibid. f. 86.

Hanover) was so gratified that he read the letter to the King. His Majesty (so the Duke replied) was pleased to believe that the nation echoed the sentiments of Fox, as the latter had intimated.¹⁰⁷ But the Secretary-at-War must have laughed in his sleeve when he thought of this letter; for Hanbury Williams had been his only consideration, and to us at least the motive of his eulogies is shamefully transparent.¹⁰⁸

In the prosecution of his duties as Secretary-at-War, Fox seems to have been diligent and pains-taking, scrupulous in his inquiries into abuses, and acting in hearty co-operation with the Duke of Newcastle, whose love of managing brought him into all departments. Nor was Fox ever wanting in tact in his dealings with his inquisitive overlord, seeing with the politician's eye the fruit that might be plucked for his friends, whose interests he had so much at heart. He was grateful to His Grace for 'civilities' to his nephew, Harry Digby;¹⁰⁹ and the question of Hanbury Williams's career was one which he never allowed the Secretary to forget.¹¹⁰ Fox had vainly tried to get his friend the embassy at Turin, but

¹⁰⁷ Newcastle to Fox, November 26, 1748: *ibid.* f. 321.

¹⁰⁸ He even mentioned Williams in the letter in question. See also below, note 111.

¹⁰⁹ Fox to Newcastle, August 3, 1750: Add. MSS., 32722, f. 40. Digby was a son of Fox's sister, Charlotte, who had married Edward Digby, son of William, fifth Lord Digby.

¹¹⁰ Fox to Newcastle, July 8, July 19, and October 15, 1748, and June 22, 1749.

by dint of perseverance he was able to procure for him a task almost equally attractive.¹¹¹

When in 1749 the resignation of Doddington left vacant the office of Treasurer of the Navy, Fox was tempted to make a bid for a post more lucrative than his own; but the King and the Duke of Cumberland 'so earnestly pressed him to remain Secretary-at-War that he could not refuse'.¹¹² While Fox presided at the War Office, the Duke felt that he had a friend upon whom he could rely in the department that was nearest his heart. By way of compensation Fox was to be gratified by the promotion of Williams as special envoy to the Court of Berlin; ¹¹³ and the coveted post fell eventually to Henry Legge, when Lyttelton, who was Pelham's choice, had failed of re-election.¹¹⁴

Pitt, ever since his outburst in 1743, had been a stalwart supporter of the Administration in the Lower House. If he had gained a promotion twice, he might well hope to succeed once more; and his interest in foreign affairs pointed to the seals of the Secretary of State. In the meantime the Pelhams had rewarded him (for the elections of 1747) with the rotten borough of Seaford;

¹¹¹ The privilege of carrying the blue riband to the Margrave of Anspach, a 'profitable commission', which Newcastle had twice promised; but Fox seemed not to trust him.—Fox to Newcastle, June 22, 1749: Add. MSS., 32718, f. 252.

¹¹² Walpole to Mann, March 23, 1749: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 365.

¹¹³ *Works of Charles Hanbury Williams*, II. 208.

¹¹⁴ Phillimore, *Memoirs of Lyttelton*, II. 477.

and the elder brother seems to have shown a particular interest in his cause that was not wholly creditable to either of them.¹¹⁵ But Pitt, on his side, was as indifferent as usual to appearances, and it mattered little to him that the outraged constituency should try to unseat him. Now and then some opponent in Parliament would have the hardihood to assail him for abandoning his earlier principles ; but the only effect of such a feat was to court a torrent of abuse, and in general the members had, themselves, too much reason for avoiding any question of political ethics.

So now that Pitt was tamed and trained in the ways of ministerial rectitude, the rivalry, which had once promised to be so noteworthy, slumbered until new issues or new interests should divide the two. In fact we have seen Pitt lending his support to the proposition of giving Fox the Seals, while the latter, on his side, wrote of the Paymaster as a man whom he 'liked and admired'.¹¹⁶ Indeed, if the two men had not been so utterly different in tastes and temperament, their brief skirmish in 1743 might have been the last. But Pitt cared too much for notoriety and Fox too little for public opinion ; the former paraded his principles in public life, the latter had too few to parade (even had it accorded with his nature to do so) ; while

¹¹⁵ See the interesting account in Torrens, *History of British Cabinets*, II. 107 ; also von Ruville, I. 284-5.

¹¹⁶ Quoted by Coxe from a letter of Fox to Williams, *Memoirs of Lord Walpole*, p. 414.

each nursed ambitions that knew no scruple. Such failings were mutually incompatible.

Fox had remained true to Pelham, as he had been to Walpole, though occasional opposition to the former on minor measures showed the distinction in his mind between the two chiefs. Bred in the school of politics of which Walpole had been so adept an organizer, Fox was politically a typical representative of his time. He had neither the taste nor the talent ever to become a reformer, and he was not of the stuff that engenders a constructive genius. Lord Bath paid him the tribute of being 'the ablest speaker on business in the House of Commons'.¹¹⁷ There indeed lay his work.

In jobbery and lobbying Fox was exceptionally expert. He knew the price of each vote, and he could read the nature of the man with whom he had to deal; more than that, he had the art of winning friends and attaching them to himself; and their interests became his. But above all he knew the House of Commons thoroughly, with all its shortcomings and fluctuations, and it was in the Commons that he chiefly proved his value to the Ministry.

As a speaker, Fox practised few of the dexterous arts in which political orators so often indulge; and his delivery showed a tendency to hesitate, which sometimes impaired the impression he wished to create; but his speeches were practical,

¹¹⁷ Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, II. 379.

if they were not eloquent, and at times exhibited such ingenuity and spirit that his animation and rapidity, as Archdeacon Coxe describes it,¹¹⁸ was more striking from his former hesitation. Quick to reply, keen and often humorous in repartee, but above all sound and logical in judgement, he had a lawyer's insight into the weak points of an argument, and seldom if ever allowed his passions to gain the mastery of him.

Pitt had the force of eloquence and could awe and impress where he could not convince. Fox had the power to convince where he could not charm. But the two champions had scarce drawn their swords. The long duel was still before them.

¹¹⁸ Coxe, *Memoirs of Lord Walpole*, p. 410.

CHAPTER II

THE CUMBERLAND PARTY

EVER since the fall of Bolingbroke the Whig Party had been supreme in the counsels of the British nation. It had triumphed in its policy of resistance to militant Catholicism, and had built up the all-controlling dyarchy of Cabinet and Commons. In a moment of public alarm the Septennial Act had been passed, curtailing the opportunities for popular reform; and the new dynasty, which was in a sense the outward and visible sign of their power, was slowly but surely rendered secure. In 1719 the Upper House, once the battle-ground of Shaftesbury and Danby, had failed utterly to unloose the fetters which bound them to the Lower; while the foreign character of the rulers of the new dynasty made as yet an obstructive King and a Tory Minister a fleeting memory of Stuart days.

But the Whigs, freed from the dangers of spirited competition, lost also its wholesome effects. They grew overbearing, overconfident. By corruption in politics the House of Commons became little better than a well-organized machine for plutocratic Whiggism; while the long period of peace and prosperity which attended Walpole's

government, was only an opportunity for making Whig supremacy the more sure. Finally, the widespread apathy, which seemed to characterize the first half of the eighteenth century, was but reflected in the absence of political integrity among most of the leaders in the State. In short, a long tenure of power had proved enervating. The infusion of a new spirit was what the Whig Party needed, but seemed unable to obtain.

Yet even a triumphant party may have its sources of weakness, and the Whigs were not free from serious forces of disintegration—yea, within their very midst. Perhaps in the breakdown of the Walpolean supremacy are to be seen the first signs of that force which revealed their gradual decay. The assault upon Walpole was in no sense a war of principles; it was, rather, an outbreak, half vengeful, half self-interested, of selfish men just wresting themselves free of the great power that had kept them in durance and painful unity so long. To keep these atoms of discord in check by gathering them all into one conglomerate unit was the prime endeavour of the man whom Walpole had named his heir. But such a union was purely a bond of temporary expediency. The evil of faction, which had made itself felt in Walpole's declining years, would rise again so soon as the governing power was found to waver; and Whiggism had never a foe more fatal than Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle.

The Tories had but a remnant of their ancient

influence. Their reputation ruined by Bolingbroke and their credit weighed down under the pall of Stuart pretensions, what hope had they of ever laying low their powerful rivals? It was vain for them to clamour for more representative parliaments while the bulk of the party adhered silently to Jacobitism. The usual tactics of an Opposition would deceive no one. Lacking a straightforward and practicable policy, they were helpless to combat a party which had adopted as its basis the commercial interests of the nation and a constitutional king. Wanting in the means of growth and deficient in effective leadership, the Tories remained but an insignificant element, powerless and unfeared. When finally, in 1745, the overthrow of the last Stuart pretender made them henceforth a *national* party and supporters—against their will—of that very dynasty, which Walpole's rule had made secure, they had not the sagacity—nor perhaps the patience—to embrace their opportunity; but, following the example of some disaffected Whigs, the Tories brought their shattered fortunes to a factious prince, and linked their fate with that of Leicester House.

It was Egmont, the guiding spirit of the Tories, who had effected this coalition in 1749.¹ But

¹ Walpole to Mann, May 3, 1749: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 368. Lord Egmont—who, by the way, was the holder of an Irish peerage, and therefore not entitled to a seat in the House of Lords—was an earnest and upright man, but not of sufficient force to impress his personality upon the party. An interesting estimate of him is to be found in a note by the second

Egmont himself was lacking in the principal requisites for leadership, while Dashwood, Nugent, and Dr. George Lee were men of merely secondary abilities, and even that gay intriguer, Bubb Doddington, with all his imperturbable vanity, could add no real strength to the cause when he resigned his office in order to devote himself wholly to the Prince. The importance of Leicester House was not to be felt till a subsequent ministry should prove its incapacity.

But a less clamorous though much more significant party² was gathering strength and coherence within the ranks of the Whigs themselves. For some years the Duke of Cumberland had been the friend, and, to a certain degree, the patron of the Earl of Sandwich, who in turn was near the heart and mind of the Duke of Bedford. The connexion

Lord Hardwicke on the back of one of Newcastle's letters to his father. 'Lord Egmont,' he writes, 'who had abilities, was a particular (*sic*) mysterious man, and made very little of his ambition. He did not draw well with the others, and could not endure Mr. Pitt.' Egmont had now been recently appointed a lord of the bedchamber to the Prince.

² I acknowledge that I am using the term 'party' rather loosely. Properly speaking, the Cumberlands represented a political 'faction', for a 'party' is generally regarded as standing for some definite principle or principles. Yet since the Whigs were at present the only political party of any real importance, and formed a plexus of widely different opinions if not interests, and since the period (so far as politics are concerned) was essentially one of faction—to the extent that the principles of Toryism, for example, were almost lost sight of—there may be some justification for using the broader and more dignified term.

between the first two has been noticed in the case of the peace negotiations ; while the last two were closely allied in the question of Chesterfield's successor for the Seals. Just how Henry Fox became attached to the Duke of Cumberland does not appear, but we soon find him a welcome *habitué* of the circle at Windsor Lodge, where the Duke lived with his unmarried sister, the Princess Amelia. Thither Fox also brought his friend Williams, whose proverbial wit must have whiled away many a dull hour for the young soldier, now forced to endure the monotony of peace.

Fox himself was gracious and entertaining, and even Chesterfield, who seems to have disliked him, admits that he 'had a wonderful dexterity in attaching individuals to himself'.³ That he was popular in social circles is certainly beyond question. His besetting sin, a fondness for the gaming table, made him the boon companion of many ; and the sources of his income were certainly not limited to his official salary. In the autumn of 1748, his friend, Horace Walpole, writes that he took a £10,000 prize ;⁴ and whatever were the means, Fox's life may assuredly be credited with financial success. Then, besides a liberal and expansive purse and a fondness for entertaining, he had the good fortune to possess a father-in-law who enjoyed a social position as high as any among

³ Chesterfield's Sketches : *Corres. of Chesterfield*, III. 1726.

⁴ Walpole to Montagu, October 20, 1748 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 346 ; see also letter of April 22, 1751.

the peers. When we add to this that Fox was a man of recognized ability, and though personally attached to Pelham and his politics, was far from approving of his brother and the Chancellor, it is not strange that his value was appreciably high to the 'Cumberland Party'.

Relieved from the burden of war, the First Lord was now free to emulate the beneficent rule of his late patron; but it was his misfortune that a united cabinet seemed beyond the range of possibility. Whereas it was Pelham's aim to lull the murmurs of discontent, whether in office or out, it seemed as though Newcastle were mentally and morally incapable of co-operation with a colleague at the Foreign Office. In the spring of 1749, ill-feeling between the two Secretaries had reached the verge of a crisis;⁵ while the Duke of Bedford's intimacy with Windsor Lodge came in time to be regarded as little less than a conspiracy by his sensitive colleague. Pelham, naturally unsuspicious, and anxious to conciliate so important a circle, was glad to accept the cordiality which Cumberland offered; but the presence of the First Lord at Windsor Lodge gave no measure of confidence to Newcastle, who seemed not to trust his brother, and felt his own exclusion the more keenly.⁶

⁵ On the occasion of the King's preparations for visiting Hanover.—Walpole to Mann, March 23, 1749: *ibid.* II. 365.

■ 'I think it a little hard,' he writes to Pelham from abroad, 'that the Duke of Cumberland and the Princess Amelia should

There was also an added reason for Newcastle's suspicions, as well as a more definite cause for his estrangement from Bedford. It appears that some differences over the recent peace negotiations⁷ had produced a coolness between the director of foreign policy and his quondam favourite, the Earl of Sandwich. Not unnaturally the Duke of Cumberland took up the cause of his friend, although willing to promote a reconciliation if that were possible. The explosion which followed is best described by Fox in a letter to Williams: 'Sandwich gave His Royal Highness a *carte blanche*. His Royal Highness proposed an

use me so cruelly as they have done: excommunicated me from all society, set a kind of brand or mark upon me and all who think with me, and set up a new, unknown, factious young party to rival me and nose me everywhere. This goes to my heart. I am sensible if I could have submitted and cringed to such usage, the public appearances would have been better, and perhaps some secret stabs been avoided; but I was too proud, and too innocent, to do it.'—Newcastle to Pelham, May 20, 1750: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, II. 336.

⁷ The episode had been another consequence of the long dissension in the Cabinet on the subject of peace. The embarrassments in the present case are not difficult to appreciate: at Hanover were the King and Newcastle, endeavouring to direct the whole negotiation; at London were the Lords Justices (the Cabinet *ex officio*), earnestly desirous of peace; and at Aix were the envoys of the several nations concerned in the war, unable to agree upon terms. Sandwich having received contradictory orders, and knowing the sentiment of the majority of the Cabinet, delayed the execution of his latest instructions (designed to coerce Austria), and in consequence was censured by the Duke of Newcastle. See Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, I. 463-4, II. 1-5.

accommodation. His Grace never honoured the Duke with any answer ; left him off, grew cool, impertinent, and inveterate. In the same manner, a letter from the Duke of Newcastle to the Princess A—— had pert, not to say impertinent, expressions in it, which, instead of explaining, he aggravated, when he came home ; and a breach ensued.'

An open quarrel with the Cumberlands was more momentous than Newcastle was likely yet to appreciate. For his own part jealousy was perhaps always the predominant influence. The Duke of Bedford Fox once described as 'the most ungovernable and governed man' that he ever knew.⁸ But however truly in the main he might suffer a friend to lead him, the Duke seldom failed, at such times, to concoct a violent surprise ; and he was both more intelligent and more independent than his contemporaries were wont to think him. Rough in his manner, but honest in his convictions, the Junior Secretary was of a temper that was capable of much stubborn resentment, yet far from intractable if handled with tact. Unhappily the Duke of Newcastle had neither the tact nor (apparently) the will to cultivate a colleague who was neither docile nor opinionless ; and a tendency of Bedford's to act independently within his own department—and that too with success⁹—

⁸ Fox to Williams, December 15, 1751 : *Coxe Papers*, Add. MSS., 9191.

⁹ In the autumn of 1748 Bedford again proved his interest in American affairs by a plan to colonize Nova Scotia with

awakened in Newcastle all the jealousy of one long accustomed to a sovereign sway in foreign affairs.

It was inevitable that the Duke of Newcastle should try the same tactics which he had employed with so much success against Harrington and Chesterfield ; and at times the King seemed quite disposed to dismiss the offender, who had never taken pains to win his favour by harmless flattery. But Bedford was more callous than Chesterfield, and the First Lord was too wary a politician to alienate without reason a valuable wing of the party. Newcastle pleaded, expostulated, even threatened resignation—but all in vain.¹⁰ Instead of the usual brief conflict with success assured, the Senior Secretary was soon to see the King and Lady Yarmouth espouse the cause of Bedford,¹¹

veterans of the late war, a matter on which he consulted Fox and Pelham, but not—as far as we know—Newcastle.—Bedford to Cumberland, October 28, 1748: *Bedford Corres.* I. 572. Later Bedford aroused his colleague's jealousy anew by settling a delicate question involved in the relations of England and France over Nova Scotia. The matter lay entirely within the Duke's department, and he seems to have co-operated with Lord Albemarle, Ambassador at Paris, without reference to Newcastle, and at first without consulting him. 'Dear brother,' complained the latter in one of his protests from Hanover, 'think what such a man *so made* is capable of doing and then think the *rest*.'—Newcastle to Pelham, June 17, 1750.

¹⁰ Once the Duke went so far as suggest that both he and his brother should give way to a Cumberland-Granville administration ; but Pelham had no desire for a useless exile, and the extravagant proposal led to another rupture between the brothers.—*Bedford Corres.* II. 88-9.

¹¹ Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, II. 126.

and in the end the fact would face him that he had converted a circle of friends into what was virtually a political party, with its single watch-word—antipathy to himself.

There was still another dispute in the Ministry, which demands a brief consideration. The Duke of Newcastle had no sooner seen peace assured than he indulged himself with dreams of a grand alliance of continental powers. Dissuaded from this undertaking,¹² the Duke later embarked upon a project that should make him the arbiter of Europe and the defender of its ancient system, the balance of power. The plan was, in short, to secure by subsidies a majority of the Imperial electors to support Maria Theresa's son for King of the Romans. To accomplish this, a network of intrigue—against which France was only too eager to play a counter-rôle—was the inevitable policy for the Duke to pursue. Stripped of all delusive euphony it was a plain question of buying votes.

Pelham, whose greatest virtue was economy, did not disguise his disapproval.¹³ It was only with great reluctance that he consented to the Bavarian subsidy (declaring publicly that it would be the last), and he was not without reason indignant when

¹² Pelham deprecated a policy of subsidies in time of peace. The disagreement resulted in another cessation of intimacy between the two.—*Ibid.* II. 47–8.

¹³ Perhaps for the sake of peace in the Cabinet, Pelham had certainly not at first discouraged the project. But later on we find him writing, 'Your foreign politics I protest I do not understand.'—*Ibid.* II. 344.

a treaty with Saxony followed. Yet the Duke was able as usual to bully his brother, and a bribe was next planned for the Elector Palatine. Williams, who had the purchase of the Saxon vote in charge, assured Newcastle that Fox would lend his support to the great scheme.¹⁴ Whether or not Fox really 'approved of subsidies' (and evidence seems to show that he did¹⁵) it is quite unlikely that he concerned himself seriously with problems of foreign politics. When called upon to support the Administration in the Commons, he would always be content to trust the judgement of the Cabinet.

But the negotiations with the Elector Palatine marked the end of the affair. As soon as some concessions were expected from the Empress-Queen, she revealed the spirit which underlay her whole attitude on the subject. She had no objection to a foreign power buying her son his rightful succession, but she refused to give up territory as the price in the transaction. And so ended Newcastle's chimerical scheme for improving his Government's relations with Austria.

It was only natural that the endless quarrels in the Cabinet should be carefully noted by the two foremost of the men outside. For Fox there was no advantage to be gained from lessening his

¹⁴ Newcastle to Pelham, June 20, 1750: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, II. 345.

¹⁵ In December 1751 he spoke with regret of the abandonment of this particular scheme.—Fox to Williams, December 15, 1751.

accustomed loyalty to Pelham ; but Pitt—perhaps with a view of succeeding Bedford when the time should come ¹⁶—sought to ingratiate himself with the Duke of Newcastle. One is tempted to smile, in view of coming events, on reading with what ardour he defends the Bavarian subsidy, and in wordy commendation expresses approval of his patron's foreign policy.¹⁷ And this was the man who had railed against Carteret !

A crisis was reached when the Paymaster fell ruthlessly upon one of Pelham's measures in Parliament ¹⁸ and tore it to shreds with merciless oratory. Was his restless spirit tired of exclusion from the pleasures of the Cabinet and indignant that three Secretaries had been chosen without regard to him ? or was he merely venting his spleen on Pelham for Newcastle's benefit ? ¹⁹ At all events the

¹⁶ Such is the plausible view advanced by Dr. von Ruville.—*William Pitt, Earl of Chatham* (Eng. trans.), I. 293–4.

¹⁷ Pitt to Newcastle, August 24, 1750 (*Corres.* I. 44), July 26, 1750, and February 25, 1751 : Add. MSS., 32721, f. 421 ; 32724, f. 143. 'Your very affectionate friend' was Newcastle's occasional method of closing his letters to Pitt ; and the correspondence between the two seems to have been extremely intimate and confidential.

¹⁸ The measure of reducing the number of seamen from 10,000 to 8,000. Pelham was forced into such measures of economy by Newcastle's expensive speculations in diplomacy.

¹⁹ Although the supposed political advantage of ingratiating himself with Newcastle was the probable motive for Pitt's action, the remarks of Horace Walpole are worth noting. 'The key to this (act),' he writes, 'you will find in his own behaviour ; whenever he wanted new advancement, he used to go off. He has openly met with great discouragement now ;

world seemed to believe the latter, and Newcastle did not hesitate to recognize the service.²⁰ At this time the discord between the brothers was at its acutest stage, until Pelham, to avoid irretrievable rupture, wrote a formal overture inviting reconciliation.²¹

Parliamentary history of 1748–50 was uninterruptedly dull. Except for a trifling question of whether the summer assizes should be held at Buckingham the two rival orators were never divided, and Pitt took little part in the debates of 1749–50.

In the spring of the former the Cumberlands actively supported some measures of Lord Anson respecting naval judicature,²² which were dropped, however, because of their unpopularity. During most of these years Fox kept an almost unbroken silence, but in 1750 the efforts of the Commons were

though he and we know Mr. Pelham so well that it will not be surprising if, though baffled, he still carries his point of Secretary of State.'—Walpole to Mann, February 9, 1751: *Letters*, II. 31. Undoubtedly Pitt's ambition for the Seals was at the bottom of the whole affair.

²⁰ See his interesting letter to a relative, Colonel Pelham.—Coxe, *Pelham*, II. 144. 'Dear Pitt,' wrote Newcastle in a letter to his wife, 'is the best of all, and is turning his thoughts to everything that can be of use.' The Duke not only enlightened him as to foreign policy, but laid bare his heart on the subject of his estrangement from his brother over the Bedford affair. See *Chatham Corres.* I. 43, 47, and 54.

²¹ Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, II. 145.

²² Walpole to Mann, March 23, 1749: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 365.

largely directed to military measures, in which Fox, as Secretary-at-War, was particularly interested. On the 23rd of January the House having resolved itself into a committee on the Mutiny Bill, attention was given to the clause enacting that 'no officer should be liable to trial a second time for the same offence, unless in the case of an appeal from a regimental to a general court-martial.' Fox introduced the amendment proposed by the committee: 'and no sentence, given by any court-martial and signed by the president, shall be liable to be revised more than once.' Egmont then suggested omitting 'more than once'.

Pitt, Murray and others supported the committee's amendment. Fox declared that he had opposed it as tending to weaken the oath, since, if Parliament should decide to inquire into the proceedings of a court-martial, it would be easy for the officers implicated to secure the passage of a bill forcing the court-martial to disclose individual opinions. But although he was still of the opinion that the amendment was unnecessary, he could see that a majority of the House favoured it, and hence he would not oppose; yet, on the other hand, he would consent to no further amendment, lest it should render the oath insignificant. He then delivered an able speech in defence of the oath of absolute secrecy, which he begged should not be exposed to unnecessary encroachments; and concluded by warning the House of the danger of allowing a naval officer to learn the names of those

members of a court-martial who had impeached his conduct. The inclusion of 'more than once' was agreed upon by a vote of 177 to 125, after which the original motion was carried.²³ Fox's attitude had shown both a desire to express his honest views, and a realization of the completeness of Parliament's subservience to its chief.

On February 7 Colonel George Townshend introduced a clause ensuring non-commissioned officers from all punishment other than those imposed by court-martial. Fox was among the speakers who opposed the innovation, which was ably defended by its author, but finally overruled by a vote of 178 to 109.²⁴

In the winter and spring of 1751 debates waxed warmest over comparatively unimportant matters, and one of the fiercest battles was fought in January over an election case. Lord Trentham, son of Earl Gower (both father and son were now identified with the Cumberland Party), having stood for Westminster in December of the past year, had defeated his opponent Sir George Vandeput by a substantial majority;²⁵ but the

²³ *Parliamentary History*, XIV. 621-2; 627-31.

²⁴ *Ibid.* XIV. 641; 654-6.

²⁵ Lord Trentham, having been recently appointed to the Admiralty, was thus compelled to stand for re-election. In 1745 there had been considerable opposition to his candidature at Westminster, and since the opposing candidate was supported by Leicester House, the conflict had virtually been a struggle between the princes—resulting in a Cumberland victory.—Gregs, *History of Parliamentary Elections*, p. 110.

scrutiny which followed seemed inexcusably protracted. In the end the High Bailiff sustained the election of Trentham, but the adherents of the losing candidate had been guilty of much obstruction and violence, among whom was a gentleman of reputed Jacobitish tendencies, the Hon. Alexander Murray.

Soon after Parliament opened after its winter recess a petition in favour of Vandeput was presented by a certain Mr. Cooke, not only charging the High Bailiff with unwarrantable delay in the aforesaid scrutiny, but also attacking Lord Trentham. The latter then retaliated by reading a letter in which Cooke had praised him in the highest terms.

At this Egmont, who had no liking for a family that had deserted the Tory standard, remarked that at least the letter was 'honest flattery', and rather irrelevantly expressed his personal obligation to Westminster. Fox, whose partisanship likewise never cooled, said in reply that 'of all men Egmont had had the smallest obligation to Westminster', which, by rejecting him, had exposed the doctrine of 'honest flattery'.²⁶ Fox and Pitt

Bedford admitted that the election cost him £7,000, and Gower paid the heavy expenses of the scrutiny.—Walpole to Mann, January 31, 1750: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 423. Vandeput was under the patronage of Egmont, who wanted to recover his interest at Westminster.

²⁶ Defeated at Westminster in the elections of 1747, Egmont had obtained through Fox's courtesy a seat for Weobley. The latter had then the dissatisfaction of seeing Egmont become

were for summoning the High Bailiff to vindicate his conduct, and when the latter had been acquitted, Murray and others were summoned to the bar to answer for lawless interference. Naturally the Tories had espoused the cause of the accused, and Nugent declared bitterly that Lord Sandwich was the author of the measures against Murray.

The Opposition, led by Egmont and sometimes reinforced by Pelham and others, showed throughout a manly desire to shield the culprit from unreasonable resentment, but Fox, who rallied the younger Whigs, seemed bent upon violent measures. After the examination of Murray had been brought to a conclusion, and Fox had summed up the case with much the same ability that he had shown in the defence of Lestock, it was resolved by an enormous majority to commit the prisoner to Newgate ; ²⁷ but not content with this victory, the eager prosecutors prevailed upon the timid Pelham to consent to the proposal that Murray should receive the sentence upon his knees. On the latter's dignified but persistent refusal Fox moved that his

soon afterwards a lord of the bedchamber to the Prince. On the other hand, the Tory leader had hoped to find in Fox an ally against Pelham, and was likewise deceived.—Walpole, *Memoirs*, I. 31 ; *Corres.* III. 34. Probably these misunderstandings led to the subsequent dislike which existed between the two.

²⁷ The motion convicting Murray of violence was passed by the enormous majority of 136 out of a total vote of 210. Doddington writes in his *Diary* (February 18, 1751), that he 'never saw an accusation worse supported by anything but numbers'.

prospective quarters be changed to the 'Little Ease', a prison so barbarously constructed that an occupant could neither stand erect nor lie at length. To this suggestion, however, the First Lord refused to consent, and the Commons were saved from an act of tyranny more worthy of the rule of James I than of an Hanoverian régime.

The month of February was spent intermittently in discussing how little comfort the injured man should be allowed, a matter that varied according to his health ; and the case languished till the end of the session, which set the prisoner at liberty.

In the next session, exasperated by pamphlet criticism, Pelham tried to relieve an uneasy conscience by warmly denouncing Murray and supporting a renewal of the case ; but the persecution was fortunately terminated by the news that the intended victim had retired to the Continent.²⁸ The conduct of Pelham, but more particularly of Fox, in the shameful affair had produced a striking example of the intoxication of an overbearing party and an irresponsible House of Commons. Whatever sins the First Lord committed are usually traceable to his craven statesmanship, but in Fox was shown a degree of cruelty, that is almost inexplicable in view of the genial, kindly nature that endeared him to so many.

²⁸ The chief authorities for the case of Murray are : Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, *passim* ; *Letters*, II. 429-30 ; *Parliamentary History*, XIV. 870-901 ; Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, II. 183-6 ; *London Magazine* for 1747, pp. 291-3, 362-6.

Soon after this a question came up of equally slight importance, but since it was, like the case of Murray, a matter that concerned the rights of a subject, the House found opportunity to wrangle to its heart's content. General Anstruther, Lieutenant-Governor of Minorca, being unpopular and for that reason suspicious, had entertained distrust of Sir Harry Erskine (who commanded a regiment there) on the ground that the latter was forming a conspiracy against his character. He accordingly brought the younger man to trial, which resulted in an acquittal.

This verdict should have satisfied Sir Harry Erskine, but he was too headstrong to be content with one victory and deliberately commenced a second chapter of the quarrel. On the occasion of a motion of Lord Egmont, who argued that Anstruther had contravened the Mutiny Act, Erskine snatched the opportunity to inveigh against the General. Hence the following day (February 20) Anstruther himself appeared in the House and another altercation took place, which seemed, however, to be the last appearance of the affair.

But the quarrel was not even then suffered to slumber. On March 4 Colonel Townshend proposed a rigid parliamentary inquiry into the aforesaid court-martial and concluded with an allusion to Anstruther's conviction in 1738, on charges of oppressing the islanders. Erskine was on his feet again with complaints of partiality, which Pelham forthwith treated with scorn, although he declared

his willingness that Anstruther should be brought before a court-martial. Pitt gave the motion the warmest support.

Fox, on the other hand, protested that no one, even though guilty, could be brought to trial for offences committed prior to the Act of Grace, and could not refrain from hinting that Erskine's disavowal of a desire for revenge was having a strange effect. The lawyers sustained Fox almost to a man; and when a motion by the Secretary-at-War had reduced the number of papers to be introduced, Erskine was given two days to prepare his charges.

The following day Townshend presented a petition against Anstruther from a certain inhabitant of Minorca, and Pitt supported it with much vehemence. This roused Fox, who ridiculed Pitt's warmth, and warned the House that the acceptance of the petition would give a handle to any other inhabitant who believed the General guilty. The petition, on Fox's motion, was rejected by a vote of 97 to 58. The King, on being informed of the debate, asked if Pitt was now trying to curry favour with Egmont.

On the 11th Erskine brought in his charges, which proved to be a very slight explosion after a great deal of smoke. Townshend subsequently made another effort to convict Anstruther, but after much bickering over technicalities, and a persistent defence of Anstruther's interests by Fox, it was decided that the Act of Grace was, as

Fox had asserted, sufficient legal defence for the General. Pitt, seeing that he had been treading on uncertain ground, sought shelter under an expressed desire to reform the Mutiny Bill, and the House was content with the promise from both parties that they would carry the quarrel no further.²⁹

Fox had felt throughout that resentment against Anstruther for his vote in the Porteous case had been the motive for the long struggle to indict him, and he knew that Erskine, as nephew of the Duke of Argyll, was extremely likely to have been prejudiced. That Fox had not shown equal fairness in the proceedings against Murray is certainly regrettable. Walpole in one of his letters remarks that 'the affair would be a trifle, if it had not opened the long-smothered rivalry between Pitt and Fox'.³⁰

Meanwhile, with Pelham's concurrence, Nugent unearthed the bill for the naturalization of foreign Protestants,³¹ to which there appeared at first but little opposition. But on February 26, when the bill was read for the second time, the First Lord received a shock that he had long had cause to expect. Fox, who had formerly opposed the bill to please him, refused to change his attitude

²⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. *passim*.

³⁰ Walpole to Mann, March 13, 1750: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 37.

³¹ Pelham had brought forward the measure in 1747, but finally dropped it on the appearance of opposition.

now when Pelham supported it. But of more pointed significance was the conduct of the satellites of Bedford, who showed their contempt for the First Lord by leaving the House before the division.³² The Cumberlands had struck their first blow.

The bill, committed on the 26th, came up before the committee on the 8th of the following month ; and to Pelham's great relief the Secretary-at-War showed his evident desire to wipe out suspicion of connivance with his faction. Skilfully vindicating his desire to appear consistent, Fox declared himself opposed to the bill, but open to conviction, and after Pelham had pointed out the advantages to be derived, the Secretary rose to assure him that he was convinced.³³ The bill was finally thrown out after an enforced adjournment of the Houses, opinion being so violently against the measure that Pelham yielded to popular prejudice. Fox and Pitt did some skirmishing on the day of its decease — 'Caesar and Pompey squabbling when they had nothing to say.'³⁴

On March 20, 1751, the rivalry between the two brothers royal, and the greatest anxiety of the King himself, was brought to an end by the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales. The childish

³² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 47-8. Bedford himself had affected to approve of the bill.

³³ While Pitt was availing himself of this fine opening for ridicule, Fox is said to have murmured, 'He is an abler speaker than I, but, thank God, I have more judgement.'—*Ibid.* I. 53.

³⁴ *Ibid.* I. 79.

petulance of his whole life had given his countrymen little cause to admire him, or to rejoice in the anticipation of his succession. But in the little party which had owned him as their patron, despair was more than ever rampant. Pitt and the other Cobhamites, who had once found consolation at the Prince's court, had long ago seceded to the Ministry, and now many Tories followed in their train to escape political effacement. Lee was frank in acknowledging the futility of their cause,³⁵ and only Doddington and Egmont seem to have refused to give up hope.

Meanwhile the Cumberlands—especially Fox and Bedford—were gaining greatly in popularity, and probably increased in numbers. Perhaps the only reason why they never secured an ascendancy over the Ministry was the selfish political caution—or was it loyalty?—of the Secretary-at-War. To Cumberland, who had doubtless questioned him on the proper policy of the party to pursue, Fox pleaded his ‘unavoidable connexion with Mr. Pelham’.³⁶ It is clear that he was in no wise ready to risk incurring the enmity of the Ministry, or to relinquish his present rôle as the trusted adjutant of Pelham. Hence when a dispute occurred between Sandwich and Halifax (President of the Board of Trade), which naturally divided

³⁵ And consequently joined the forces of the Administration in debate.—Fox to Williams, December 15, 1751: *Memoirs of Lord Walpole*, p. 379.

³⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 60.

the Cumberlands against their colleagues in the Ministry, Fox frankly told Bedford, who had counted on his support, that in all disagreements he must act with the First Lord. The advantage of the Pelhams over Bedford was obvious. Outvoted in a subsequent Cabinet meeting at Bedford House, the latter had fresh cause for resentment against the magnates of the Ministry.³⁷

Several facts, however, made it apparent that Bedford was a very different sort of antagonist from Harrington or Chesterfield. The attitude of many of his party in the Commons might well be taken as indicating defiance, while a sudden indifference to the affairs of his office brought upon him the disfavour of the sedulous Pelham. Yet abrupt dismissal was still to be avoided, if possible ; while a retirement in favour of Sandwich—to which Bedford was supposed to be inclined—would not free the Ministry from a factious party. Again and again the Duke of Newcastle begged for his colleague's removal ; but his appeals seemed only to rouse the exasperation of the King, who declared (so Fox tells us) that any one, who importuned him further on the subject, would himself be considered the aggressor.³⁸

Meanwhile a new question arose, which threatened to widen the gulf between the factions

³⁷ The details of this affair are given in *ibid.* I. 53-4 ; 59-60. Bedford told the Pelhams that their opposition was personally directed against him ; this they denied.

³⁸ Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, II. 163.

and increase the difficulties of the Administration. More momentous far than the death of the Prince was the field of argument which it opened respecting the provisions to be made against the King's demise. The new heir-apparent was a dull, unpromising boy of twelve, completely subjected to the opinions of his mother, who regarded with unfeigned jealousy the King's partiality for his younger son. Of all this Fox was fully aware, and having an evident desire to see the Prince in more wholesome surroundings, he suggested his removal to St. James, where the mother's influence could not penetrate.³⁹ But Pelham neither possessed the courage of Fox, nor shared the latter's distrust of Leicester House; and though he kept the advice a secret, his timidity restrained him from a step that might create a temporary uproar, however greatly he might stand to profit in the end. For the present, therefore, Pelham resorted to his usual half-way measures by surrounding the young Prince with men, like Lord Waldegrave and Andrew Stone, upon whose loyalty he felt that he could rely.

The King naturally wished the regency secured to the son he had always loved; but the Pelhams, who kept an eye on the distracted Tories, had reason to feel that Leicester House was a safer pillar of support than the party which held the irrepressible Bedford. A compromise was finally devised by which the Princess should be regent,

³⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George III* (ed. Barker), IV. 92.

with sole guardianship of the heir-apparent, but subject in the governmental office to the dictates of a council, headed by the Duke of Cumberland, and composed of the chief officers of state as well as four additional members to be designated by the King's will.⁴⁰ The Chancellor, to whom was given the task of drawing up the bill, was urged to preface it with words about the 'tenour of the English constitution'—as a mask, no doubt, to the personal element; but the Duke told Fox with much bitterness that His Lordship had explained to him that circumstances might make it inconvenient. 'That crisis,' added Cumberland, 'must be when I am out of the question.' Yet, despite his disappointment, the Duke was careful to avoid a rupture; and both Bedford and Sandwich gave their support to the bill.

The question had been formally opened on April 21 by Newcastle in the Peers and Pelham in the Commons, both steering out of their natural course to eulogize the Duke of Cumberland. It was not, however, until May 13 that the Commons began a serious discussion of the measure, and little opposition seemed then to appear. The Lords, for their part, were almost unanimous for the bill, and a vote for committal passed the Upper House with an insignificant negative of 12 votes out of a total of 118. It was subsequently passed in amended form with the same unanimity.

But in the committee of the Lower House on

⁴⁰ May, *Constitutional History*, I. 108.

the 16th, a struggle, long deferred, broke out in bitter, if indeed short-lived fury. After a preliminary skirmish, in which the Speaker, who had yielded the chair to Pelham, raised several objections to the bill on constitutional grounds,⁴¹ Fox rose to fight the battle of his patron. One of the weak points of the bill was the clause which ruled that any persons 'concurring in order to change the form of government' were to 'incur the penalties of *praemunire*', which usually signified outlawry and forfeiture; and the astute Secretary-at-War was quick to see the opening it gave for contention.

After affecting to approve of the bill as a whole, he averred that the *praemunire* clause was couched in terms so ambiguous that whoever had penned it was, in his opinion, justly worthy of its penalties. 'Can fourteen persons,' he declared, 'have power and not want more than their share? and if the Regent and her council should proclaim the young King major a year before the time specified, would not a man in the street, who hallooed at such a proclamation, be guilty of a *praemunire*?' 'The crime,' he added, 'is too uncertainly described for such heavy punishment, and of all times, a minority is the worst to subject a people to penal laws.' He would prefer impeachment as a definite punishment for such offences 'as it could only be

⁴¹ Doddington reports that Speaker Onslow made a 'very fine speech'.—*Diary*, May 16, 1751. He was answered by Murray and Charles Yorke (son of the Chancellor).

meant to come at great persons, who should attempt to disturb the settlement'.⁴²

At this juncture Pelham, his placid temper unusually ruffled, called the speaker to order with the rebuke that the *praemunire* clause was not then a matter before the House.

When in course of time the clause respecting the council became the subject of debate, Pitt gave his support to the nomination of a restrictive board, and was warmly answered by Fox.⁴³ Striking more from confidence in his logic than sincerity of conviction, the latter exclaimed, 'It is absurd not to give the Princess the whole power of Royalty, because she is not called Queen.' As for the Council, he believed they would assist her, but 'if not', he added, 'whoever should advise her to make a speech to Parliament would be guilty of a *praemunire*.'

Pitt replied that the tendency of such a speech would not be to alter a plan of regency, but to check faction, and declaring himself of Mr. Fox's opinion on the question, he protested that they must have misunderstood each other. He then went out of his way to eulogize the late Prince, and thinking, no doubt, of the feud in the royal

⁴² Fox's contempt for the legal profession was then shown by his sneering remark that the whole clause might as well be omitted, 'because every man, without being a lawyer, ought to know what his regent can or cannot do.'

⁴³ Since Fox must certainly have preferred that the power of the Princess should be restricted, we may infer that he was simply trying to throw the whole bill into contempt.

house, he declared that 'in any case he should not be for laying power where there may be a temptation to prolong it'.

The covert insult was to say the least ill-advised, and in view of the fact that the Duke had made no attempt to combat the intentions of the Ministry, it was unkind in the extreme. But the good friend of Cumberland was quick to repel the insinuation. 'A regent,' was his retort, 'cannot be more dangerous than a King;' and after a few additional remarks the Secretary-at-War signified his contempt by leaving the House before the division.

Next day, however, Fox was again at his post, ready to renew the fight upon the *praemunire* clause. After exposing with much skill the obscurity with which the clause had been framed, he declared that the crimes marked for punishment by this law should be known with certainty, and not be subject to constructions. 'The door of the house where the plague is should be marked, and then whoever enters, let him die!' Among the phrases he objected to were the words 'in order to vary the settlement', adding ironically that by the same rule a man would be guilty of robbing, who went to a goldsmith's *in order to rob*. Later, after a fling at Murray, he inquired whether, in case an unsuccessful attempt was made in Parliament to repeal the act, the attempters would be guilty of a *praemunire*. When Yonge soon afterward defended '*concurring*' on the ground that it

meant more than the other words following, Fox ridiculed him sharply for his 'reverence for the sanction of tautology'. Thus, as Walpole remarks, the debate degenerated into a dispute, 'more worthy of grammarians than of the House of Commons.'⁴⁴

Fox himself had no reason to doubt the issue, but his party insisted upon a division, and the clause was found to be passed by a vote of 126 to 40. After the debate Pelham reproached Fox for not having 'spoken like himself'. 'I know it,' the latter retorted, 'if I had, I would have said ten times more against the bill.'⁴⁵

The attitude of the Secretary-at-War in riddling the provisions of a bill certain to pass in its main scheme at least, was undoubtedly due to his loyalty to the man whom he felt to be undeservedly put aside, and it must be admitted that the victory of the Princess portended results which even Fox could not have foreseen. But in its bearing upon the Ministry his conduct was significant. While too careful of his own ambition to create a disturbance on Bedford's account, he made it clear that the situation was quite different when the cause of Cumberland clashed with the Pelham interests. Thus in a sense Fox had reached the parting of the ways. Henceforth the First Lord was not to

⁴⁴ For the debates on the Regency Bill see Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, *passim*; Doddington, *Diary*, May 7, 8, 10, 13, and 16, 1751; Coxe, *Pelham*, II. 168-75.

⁴⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 115.

regard him as blindly devoted to the Pelham ascendancy.

The Duke of Cumberland, on the other hand, had throughout maintained his dignified reserve. When the Chancellor gave him an account of the bill, his sole response was, 'Return my thanks to the King for the plan of the regency. As for the part allotted to me, I shall submit to it, because he commands it, be the regency what it will.' Then, fearing that Pelham might lose the force of the reply, if transmitted through a friend, the Duke requested Fox to repeat it to the Minister, bidding him expressly not to omit the word, 'submit'. 'It is a material word,' he added, 'and the Lord Chancellor will remember it, however he reports it.'⁴⁶ It is hardly reasonable to suppose that His Royal Highness was excessively ambitious for political power, but his feelings were deeply wounded by what he regarded as a personal slight and he told Fox that it 'marked him a bad man to posterity'.⁴⁷ It is not unlikely that he felt that the Pelhams were revenging themselves for his patronage of the party that contained Bedford and Sandwich.

On the 20th the Regency Bill in its entirety passed the House of Commons, and Fox did not deny it the honour of his vote. About the same time the King had an interesting conversation with the Secretary-at-War, which showed their common affection for the man who had lost.

⁴⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 89-90.

⁴⁷ Fox to Williams, December 15, 1751: Add. MSS., 9191.

His Majesty began by asking whom he would have made regent. 'Sir,' replied Fox, with becoming modesty, 'I never thought I should be asked and therefore never thought—if it was impossible the Duke should.'

'My affection was there,' replied the King, and then without discussing the 'possibility', he said that he had a good opinion of the Princess, but did not feel that he knew her. After commending the restrictions provided, he finally asked: 'What did you say against the bill? Do you like it? Tell me honestly.'

Fox replied, 'If you ask me, Sir—No. What I said against it was because what was said for it was against the Duke.'

'I thank you for that,' was the King's reply. 'My affection was with my son. I assure you, Mr. Fox, I like you the better for wishing well to him. The English nation is so changeable. I don't know why they dislike him.'⁴⁸

Apparently Fox said nothing in Bedford's interest. Perhaps he had not even thought of him, since they were not then the intimate friends that they later became; or possibly Fox was piqued by the Duke's conduct on the Regency Bill. At all events we know that Fox was most careful about his connexions; and on one occasion when Sandwich, fearing a rupture and not anxious for dismissal, had begged him to carry a 'reconciling message' to the First Lord, Fox politely but firmly declined

⁴⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 137-8.

the commission.⁴⁹ Clearly he must above all avoid the imputation of being factious. Yet, so far as the Duke was concerned, there were certainly grounds for greater intimacy between the two through their common affection for a young member of the Commons, Richard Rigby by name, a jovial, crafty, unscrupulous man, who had succeeded in supplanting Sandwich as the controlling influence at Woburn.⁵⁰

The affair of the Regency Bill—even though Bedford had been quiet—hastened without doubt the crisis between the two Secretaries. The Duke of Cumberland was sullen and inwardly hostile, and the danger of having two prominent enemies in the Cabinet was not to be lightly regarded. Fox, foreseeing the storm, and being very anxious to keep Bedford in the Cabinet, advised His Grace to resign and accept a smaller office to ‘save his honour’,⁵¹ such a one having long been open to him—the post of Master of the Horse.⁵² But the little Duke—whether tutored by Sandwich or Rigby, we cannot say—maintained a provoking reserve, and the Duke of Devonshire’s son, the Marquis of Hartington, was finally given the post left vacant by Richmond’s death.⁵³

⁴⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 60.

⁵⁰ Fox to Williams, December 15, 1751: Add. MSS., 9191.

⁵¹ Ibid.: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 162.

⁵² The notion of giving this post to Bedford as compensation for removing him had long been a topic in the correspondence between Newcastle and Pelham.

⁵³ The Duke of Richmond, Fox’s father-in-law, died on

Pelham, as Leader of the House of Commons and Minister as well, felt only too keenly the extreme value of a harmonious Parliament, and he also knew from bitter experience the disposition of his elder brother; it was in short from his perpetual aim to keep the political world in peaceful torpor, rather than from an ounce of partiality to Bedford, that he had shrunk from consenting to the elimination of the Duke's party. But when these votes on more than one occasion had shown a tendency to go astray, the Leader of the Lower House began to do some careful cogitating. It would be serious if he should lose Fox, who was already wavering, and might accept with alacrity an excuse for severing the bond; yet, after all, Henry Pelham was a politician before he was anything, and he thought he knew his man.

If the First Lord had already given serious thought to the matter, certainly the necessity had now taken a more definite mould, and he told Lady Yarmouth, with un-Pelham-like firmness, that 'in his opinion the present state of affairs would not do', after which he wrote to his brother

August 8, 1750. During his closing years Fox and Lady Caroline had amply atoned for their disobedience in the past. The Duchess, who was inconsolable, followed her husband little more than a year later; and the education of the two sons (the young Duke and the Earl of March) was the subject of much anxious correspondence between Newcastle and Fox, chiefly concerned, it would seem, with the escapades of the elder at Geneva.

that it was 'in the King's power' to act.⁵⁴ These excellent brothers, so unlike in most respects, had at least one trait in common, which was to put responsibility, if possible, upon some one else.

Without difficulty, and probably without explanation, the Pelhams persuaded His Majesty to dismiss Lord Sandwich, whom they knew he disliked, being confident that Bedford's fall would result from the ruse. Sandwich received word of his *congé* at Windsor Lodge, and Legge brought the news to the Duke at Woburn, who took the hint without delay. But a few days later the hot-tempered ex-Secretary allowed himself the satisfaction of arraigning Newcastle in the Closet with a scrupulous disregard for euphemism; and the King obliged His Grace by refusing audience to the Duke of Newcastle for several weeks.⁵⁵

But at last it was done. The First Lord, 'drawn always' (as Fox expressed it⁵⁶) 'by the Duke of Newcastle and generally dragged,' had finally given way to his unamiable brother. In vain might the Duke beseech His Majesty to receive him, and even write a long memorial, throwing responsibility upon the King;⁵⁷ the calmer brother at the

⁵⁴ Pelham to Newcastle, March 16, 1751: Add. MSS., 32724, f. 190. We can see that Pelham had made up his mind shortly before the Prince's death, and this latter event had strengthened him politically owing to the acquisition of the Tories.

⁵⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 164-5, 172.

⁵⁶ Fox to Williams, December 15, 1751.

⁵⁷ Newcastle to the King, undated: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*. II. 401.

Treasury Board was only concerned with the effect of the move upon politics. True, there was no unpleasant aftermath. Yet we cannot help wishing that the brothers could have looked in at Holland House on June 21, when Fox, Rigby and Marlborough laughed with unmeasured scorn at a printed panegyric of the Duke, and His Grace of Blenheim told how he had entrapped the Senior Secretary into an admission that silence still reigned in the Closet.⁵⁸

With the removal of Bedford, the leadership of the Cumberland Party devolved naturally upon Fox. True, he was not—as his predecessor had been—an occupant of high ministerial office; but his intimate friendship with the Duke of Cumberland, and—by virtue of that—his cordial relations with the King, above all his position as leading debater for the Administration, gave him a distinction quite unique among his party. Beyond the fact that Trentham quitted his seat in the Admiralty and Rigby waxed sarcastic over Bedford's successor,⁵⁹ the Cumberlands revealed no added hostility, and Gower, the Duke's own father-in-law, was greatly vexed because his son showed so much spirit.

⁵⁸ Rigby to Bedford, June 27, 1751: *Bedford Corres.* II. 94.

⁵⁹ Rigby, with sarcastic recollection of four upheavals, wrote to Bedford that his successor, who 'does not understand the word "resign"', and has never heard of a Secretary of State being turned out, concludes that he is in for life'.—Rigby to Bedford, June 27, 1751.

Meanwhile a compliment was paid to Fox from an unexpected quarter. Granville's keen eye had not been closed during the recent convulsion, and we can imagine the grim humour with which he regarded the third removal from the position he had once adorned and perhaps, by force of contrast, merited still. But wit and wine were, after all, poor substitutes for talents going to waste, and in Fox's growing credit he saw a chance to clamber upon the stage once more. Accordingly he paid prompt and vigorous court, hoped to have a word with Fox in Holland House, and expressed a desire to become reconciled even to that man who had blasted his career. The subtle response was not the least discouraging: 'They have paved your way.'

Next day Granville made good use of the overture by attributing the initiative to Fox;⁶⁰ and the latter may very well have remembered this when he remarked about a year later to Rigby that he would not take Granville's word for a farthing, nor trust him for half an hour.⁶¹

It was no doubt largely in the hope that the Closet would moderate its coldness, that Newcastle persuaded his brother to countenance a reconciliation with their old antagonist,⁶² and Granville was accordingly appointed to the Presidency of the Council. Other changes were the promotion

⁶⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 171.

⁶¹ Rigby to Bedford, June 2, 1753: *Bedford Corres.* II. 125.

⁶² Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, II. 190.

of Anson (son-in-law of the Chancellor) to succeed Sandwich at the Admiralty, while for Bedford's office the Duke found in the Earl of Holderness a man who was in every respect fitted to become his vassal. Of course His Grace would feel the pangs of jealousy at times—that was to be expected. But there were no more quarrels between rivals at the Foreign Office.

The closing months of 1751 were comparatively uneventful. In November the Duke of Cumberland suffered from injuries due to a fall from his horse, and consequently found much comfort in Fox's daily visits; ⁶³ the Pelhams, however, were carefully excluded, in spite of their apparent interest—whether real or feigned—in the convalescence of the invalid. Upon the Duke's inquiring how the brothers behaved, Fox answered, 'Both cried; the Duke of Newcastle over-acted it, but Mr. Pelham seemed really concerned.' The judgement of His Royal Highness was that Newcastle wept because he thought it his duty to call that morning, but 'Pelham,' concluded the Duke, '. . . is such a fellow that I can believe he was in earnest.'

The King, still wishing perhaps that his son had triumphed in the regency question, remarked to Fox, 'He has a head to guide, to rule and to direct.' This Fox afterwards reported to the Duke, who said his father had talked to him in

⁶³ 'His illness,' wrote Fox, 'showed his affection and regard for me to be greater than I ever before presumed to think it.'—Fox to Williams, December 15, 1751: Add. MSS., 9191.

the same strain. 'Why then, Sir,' replied the faithful friend, 'don't you just put him in mind in those fits of tenderness of what he has done to prevent your doing so?' But Cumberland felt that it would be useless now that the regency had been settled, and that such remonstrance would certainly give pain to His Majesty.⁶⁴ Had George II lived a century sooner, no cautious Pelham could have stamped out the embers of royal independence.

Why Fox never gained an influence over the King is difficult to understand. As the Duke of Cumberland's champion he might appear as the most natural favourite of His Majesty; and yet it never can be said—even in 1757—that he possessed much power in the Closet. Of course, the Duke of Newcastle may have seen fit to prevent it, for he was not above misrepresenting a man whose influence was to be feared; and in later years Fox's own blunders as a politician may have earned the King's contempt. But at all events the Secretary-at-War could never be sure of the royal favour, and even the career of his dearest protégé, Williams, occasionally met with checks. When the envoy was returning home from Saxony in June 1752, the King obstinately refused to receive him in Hanover,⁶⁵ and the Duke was distressed for fear

⁶⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 184-5.

⁶⁵ 'He wants to come,' complained the King, 'to talk his wit everywhere, and you to have him to talk politics to.'

lest Fox should hold him accountable for this affront to his friend.⁶⁶

The fact was, neither brother could well afford to lose Fox's support. In diplomatic problems he accepted the Duke's views without question, and in Parliament—when no conflicting interest was involved—he was still the trusted supporter of Pelham. Thus he had defended the measure which occasioned the secession of Pitt and his friends,⁶⁷ and he spoke in support of the Saxon Treaty, which Bedford attacked with vehemence—the latter's first overt act of hostility since his dismissal.

Emboldened perhaps by the ex-Secretary's ill-humour, the Opposition then presented a resolution against all subsidies in time of peace—a move which provoked Pelham to an unwontedly bitter invective against his annoyers. When he asked the Secretary-at-War after the debate whether he

⁶⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, May 17, 1752: Add. MSS., 32722, f. 100.

⁶⁷ Pelham's measure to reduce the number of seamen, to which we have already alluded. Fox's speech—a reply to Thomas Potter, one of the Cobhamites (or Pittites, as we should perhaps call them, for Cobham had died in 1749)—showed that he had carefully grasped the Newcastle standpoint with regard to a system of subsidies. Since Pelham's measure was opposed by Newcastle, we can justly credit him with having acted in a most cautious and politic manner. He supported Pelham but he humoured Newcastle. The point which he made in his speech was that the money saved by this reduction in the number of seamen could be wisely spent in cementing a system of alliances on the Continent.—*Parliamentary History*, XIV. 854–60.

had spoken too strongly, Fox retorted, 'No, as they began, though you originally gave the provocation.' 'Oh, Fox,' answered the other reproachfully, 'you did not feel for me as I should for you in the same circumstances.'⁶⁸ The episode shows plainly that the way of a politician is hard, if he be not wholly callous. It might be easy enough for a Cabinet intriguer to subsidize half Europe, but quite a different matter for his brother to justify and palliate a system with which he had no sympathy. During the following autumn Pelham frankly expressed his feelings to Doddington, and questioned both the policy and the way it was conducted. After thus unburdening his mind, with the added complaint that he 'had been misrepresented', the First Lord was treated to the cold consolation that not only had some one attributed the policy to him, but that Doddington's own vote had been influenced thereby. 'Who said that?' Pelham inquired, 'Pitt?'

No, responded Doddington, he thought it was Fox; whereupon Pelham murmured, 'Oh — Fox,' with most evident uneasiness.⁶⁹ The allegation may well have been false, but it created an unpleasant suspicion of double-dealing on the part of the Secretary-at-War.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 222-3.

⁶⁹ Doddington, *Diary*, October 4, 1752.

⁷⁰ It cannot be regarded as certain, however (even if the allegation be true), that Fox was amusing himself at Pelham's expense. It is quite possible that he simply used Pelham's

Fox had, in fact, a somewhat difficult part to play. He was in no wise desirous of jeopardizing his position by a close union with Bedford; and yet it was essential that he should not only impress the Ministry with his importance, but preserve the confidence and esteem of his exceedingly useful following, the Cumberland Party. Moreover, although Pelham was still in his prime, and there was no expectation of a change in the Ministry for many years to come, still the Secretary-at-War was not averse to storing up strength for 'that distant day'. 'It is prodigious' (so Lord Hillsborough told Doddington) how many friends he has made,' and the former seemed struck with the frankness with which he treated his political associates.⁷¹ Perhaps sometimes this candour was a screen for his caution. It would not be well for his party to think that he was playing them false out of loyalty to Pelham, and yet he could not go to the lengths Bedford wished, and he always refused to make enemies in cases of trifling importance. When Murray and Stone were arraigned on the ridiculous charge of having drunk the health of the Pretender, Fox would give no encouragement to Bedford when the latter joined the outcry against them. On one occasion when asked if the matter should be reported to Cumberland, Fox answered

name in getting Doddington's vote for an established policy of the Administration. It was certainly not Fox's fault that Pelham accepted that policy against his own better judgement.

⁷¹ Doddington, *Diary*, November 27, 1752.

shortly that 'the Duke never concerned himself out of his province, the army'.⁷²

It was perhaps during the early months of 1753 that Fox's reputation stood at its highest point. As yet it was sullied by no act of his own, and if enemies existed, who frowned upon his ambition or his politics, we have at least no record of them. Bedford might still raise the hopes of the Opposition, but the bulk of the party found a safer anchorage in Fox.

We have now to consider the first serious offence which Fox committed against his own reputation, and almost the only example in his parliamentary career when personal hatred mastered his self-control. Shortly after the opening of the year 1753 Lord Bath instigated the lawyers to reform the existing conditions relative to marriage, a lack of regard for the sacred office having been long a menace to society at large. Although there was already legislation in force, the means of evading it were many; and the evil was further aggravated by the nefarious practice of numerous clergymen who had dropped out of active work and now earned their livelihood by marrying any one who applied to them, without scruple or inquiry. Naturally such a traffic was often promoted by underhand means, and the heir of a noble house was frequently decoyed into an act that brought ruin to his career and a stain upon his name.

⁷² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 266.

The first effort at reform having been badly handled, the Chancellor himself took up the cause and framed a bill which was destined to yield most beneficial results. No marriage (other than those of Jews or Quakers) was henceforth to be valid unless celebrated by a priest in orders ; and before such ceremony could take place, either banns must be published in the parish church for three successive Sundays, or else a costly licence obtained from the archbishop—conditional in the case of minors on the parents' consent. The greatest defect of the Clandestine Marriage Bill—the withholding of all recognition from Nonconformist ceremonies—found, strangely enough, no place in all the bitter speeches that were made against the measure. Yet the very need of its provisions is evidence enough of the low moral tone of the age that gave us Wesley.

The bill was introduced in the House of Lords on May 19, and hotly opposed by the Duke of Bedford ; but otherwise there was little resistance, and the measure was sent down to the Commons after some amending. But in the Lower House (where discussion commenced on May 7) the Opposition were more numerous and more violent. Conspicuous on the offensive were the Speaker himself, Nugent, Townshend and Fox ; and personalities were indulged in to an extent unknown for many years. Horace Walpole, whose hatred of the Pelhams had placed him among the opponents of the bill, speaks much of the humour

that interspersed the debates, and gives a lively picture of the bitter animosities shown. On one occasion the Speaker, furious at being misrepresented, gave the lie to the Attorney-General, and a serious affair was only narrowly averted. Another day the youthful Charles Townshend entertained the House by a clever portrayal of himself as an injured younger son, who could not compete with his elder brother, if secret marriages with heiresses were to be prohibited. It was found, however, that the latter could change his mood entirely, and he marked his Parliamentary début by bitter and personal attacks upon the Chancellor himself.

But far the hardest blows were dealt by Fox, who promised to dispute every inch of ground, and kept his word. His own clandestine marriage was enough to interest him in the question, but the dislike which he apparently felt for the lawyers, and which he had shown in the course of the regency debates, was now even more strikingly exemplified. Always disposed to aim at the Chancellor in particular, he hailed him as their ‘*mufti*’,⁷³ and ridiculed His Lordship under the name of Dr. Galley (the King’s chaplain), who had written a pamphlet, Walpole tells us, in which he had declared that fathers were ‘too apt to forgive’. ‘I thought,’ continued Fox, ‘that the Gospel

⁷³ ‘He laid open the chicanery and jargon of the lawyers,’ writes Walpole, ‘the pride of their mufti, and the arbitrary manner of enforcing the bill.’ We are not told what this ‘arbitrary manner’ was.

enjoined forgiveness, but pious Dr. Galley thinks fathers are too apt to forgive.'

Each day the House sat till late, while Fox and Pelham sparred unceasingly, the latter fighting valiantly the battles of his friend, although it is said that he disapproved of the measure itself. Perhaps long practice in defending Newcastle's treaties had made him adept in manufacturing arguments; at all events we are told that the numbers against the bill diminished after the Minister had taken his stand upon it.

On the 30th the Committee considered the clause respecting the consent of parents, and Fox amused the House at the expense of the Chancellor.⁷⁴ Finally Charles Yorke, who was provoked into an effort to avenge his father, declared with emphasis that such conduct was 'new in Parliament, new in politics, new in ambition', and after defending the Chancellor in glowing terms, he predicted that Fox would rue his impertinence.

Fox answered quickly, 'Is it new in Parliament to be conscientious? I hope not. Is it new in politics? I am afraid it is. Is it new in ambition?

⁷⁴ A certain member named Wibraham, in defending the bill, had said: 'If you have a sore leg, will you not try gentler remedies first.' Fox replied by telling the story of a physician who wished to amputate a friend's leg, but the latter would not consent till a more merciful one was called in for consultation. The surgeons conferred. The ignorant one said, "I know it might be saved, but I have given my opinion; my character depends upon it, and we must carry it through." The leg was cut off.'

It certainly is (he added with a sneer) to attack *such authority*.'

This called for Pelham's interference and the Secretary-at-War was properly rebuked.

The next day, however, found Fox as incorrigible as ever, and when Sir Robert Henley and the Solicitor-General gave mutually contradictory arguments in favour of the bill, he is said to have made sport of them both. On June 1, a clause proposed by Fox himself was discussed, in which he introduced the suggestion of legitimizing all children born out of wedlock if the parents afterward married. It is possible that Fox was not greatly interested in the result, although it was the only piece of legislation he ever attempted; but his supporters shouted, 'Aye' so loudly, when the vote was taken, that the Speaker declared it carried, and so compelled Pelham to divide the House. It was then found to be lost by 102 votes against 26.

On the 4th the Marriage Act was read for the last time in the Commons. Nugent, who had been in the foreground from the first, repeated his attacks on the bill, and Charles Townshend followed shortly after, not confining himself this time to destructive analysis, but venturing to prescribe a proper register of marriages as a preventative of polygamy. Hillsborough,⁷⁵ who spoke next, criti-

⁷⁵ Lord Hillsborough, a friend of Fox, was, like Egmont, the holder of an Irish peerage, and therefore not entitled to a seat in the House of Lords.

cized Townshend as having a manner so engaging and a voice so musical that it pleased the ear, even though it failed to pervert the understanding.

After his friend had finished his speech of defence, it was Fox's opportunity, and it is easy to imagine the wondering interest which must have played over the faces of his audience as he rose to address them. What new stratagem of argument or ridicule would he devise ?

'As I cannot pretend,' he began, 'to have any music in my voice, I am afraid the noble lord will receive neither pleasure nor interest from what I am to say upon the present subject.' Then snatching up his copy of the bill, he exclaimed, 'There is not so much as a clause, hardly indeed a sentence that has not been changed since the bill came down from the Lords, and no less than six or seven clauses have been added. But this I need not tell you. I shall show it,' and he held up the sheet to the full view of the assembled House.⁷⁶

Here Murray, who was seated beside him and observed the red ink with which Fox had inserted the various amendments, remarked audibly, 'How bloody it looks !'

Fox turned quickly. 'Yes, but thou canst not say *I* did it. Look,' he said, glancing at the Attorney-General, 'what a rent the learned Casca made. Through this (turning to Pelham) the well-beloved Brutus stabbed.'

⁷⁶ As in the case of the Regency Bill, Fox was endeavouring to show that the details of the measure had been ill-considered.

Then taking up a discussion of the bill, he assailed it chiefly on three points: (1) that it would increase rather than decrease immorality; (2) that it tended to convert the nobles into an exclusive clique; and (3) that it would undermine the industries of the nation by making marriage difficult for the poor. After a brief consideration of the first point, in which he endeavoured to prove that a woman's position would be less secure than before, he said, 'To accumulate the whole of society into a few families, is inconsistent with the happiness of every society, and to throw it all into the hands of our nobility is inconsistent with our constitution in particular. It is not the increase of their military power that we are at present afraid of; it is an increase of their elective power, and the increase of their elective power will be of more danger to our constitution than ever the military power was.' Turning from these strange assertions to tactics to which his legal mind was better fitted, he argued that instead of promoting marriage among the poorer people, the proposed act would obstruct it. The present laws,—laws which had come down, indeed, from Catholic times—it must be granted, made both the proclamation of banns and a licence necessary. 'But even the High Church itself never took upon it to declare that to be void, which was in itself valid, both by the law of God and the law of nature; for such is every marriage not prohibited by these laws . . . , let it have been contracted in never so clandestine

a manner, let the inequality between the contracting parties be never so great, with regard to rank and character in the world.' He showed that by a complication in the Church Calendar a marriage could be delayed a month, and if the contracting parties knew not how to write, how could the Minister enter them upon the register? Furthermore, if the vicar and curate of a particular parish should be ill or absent, it would appear that all marriages in that church or chapel must be indefinitely suspended, and if both parties lived in that parish, they could be married nowhere else. He seconded Townshend's suggestion of a register as a substitute for both licence and banns.

'And all these inconsistencies,' he exclaimed, 'all these dangers we are to expose ourselves to, lest the daughter of a noble or rich father should marry a footman or a sharper;' ⁷⁷ and he argued with some reason that there was something amiss in a daughter's character or education if she was thus led astray.

Growing warmer in his attack, he did not hesitate to aver that the instigators of the bill would be accomplices in many atrocious crimes. 'We ought not,' he concluded, 'to think of preventing clandestine marriages, even of the most infamous sort, by exposing the public to so many inconveniences and dangers, as I have shown it will

⁷⁷ This was, of course, totally untrue. The dangers of the noble class were of comparatively slight importance in the eyes of the promoters of the bill.

be exposed by the bill, now for the last time under consideration ; and therefore I shall most heartily give my negative to its being passed as a law.'

The arguments of Fox were ably refuted by Murray, who, taking a broader view, showed first that the status of a woman was improved by the introduction of fixed rules to replace ambiguity, secondly that the fact that a man attained his majority at twenty-one would obviate the dangers of an exclusive oligarchy, and thirdly that usage had demonstrated that publishing of the banns did not discourage the poor from marrying. The bill with its numerous amendments was passed by a vote of 125 to 56, and was ready for final decision in the Lords.⁷⁸

It is noticeable that Fox refrained from attacking the author in his final appearance in debate, and the fact that he explained in one of his speeches that he had not designed to abuse the Chancellor, and appeared anxious to make amends—all seem to show that his warmth had carried him further than he had intended. The real explanation of his vindictive, personal invectives is to be found, as he himself betrayed to Pelham later,⁷⁹ in the unextinguishable resentment that he felt against Hardwicke and Newcastle for the desertion of Sir

⁷⁸ Authorities for the debate in the Commons: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, *passim*; *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 160-3, 168-9; Rigby to Bedford, June 2, 1753, *Bedford Corres.* (for Fox's proposed amendment); *Parliamentary History*, XV. 1-86; see also Coxe's *Pelham*, II. chap. xxx.

⁷⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 305.

Robert Walpole, whom Fox had idolized.⁸⁰ True in the latter case, the charge has been shown to be improbable in the former, but Fox had his own manner of gauging his contemporaries, and cynicism was the natural bent of the age. 'As Christian charity,' writes Walpole, 'is not the most eminent virtue of either of the champions, this quarrel is not likely to be soon reconciled.'⁸¹

It remains yet to speak of the author's own part in the affair. Fox had expressed his gratitude to Bedford for opposition to the bill, and confessed that foreseeing a violent response from the Chancellor, he was pleased with the thought of an ally in the Upper House.⁸² On the 6th the measure which had suffered such a careful overhauling in the Commons came up for final decision in the Lords; and it was now that Hardwicke found his opportunity for revenge. After expressing with dignity his astonishment that the bill should have called forth so much odium, the Chancellor gave way to his indignation against Fox and Townshend. 'It would not, indeed, have been surprising,' he declared, 'that young men in the warmth of their constitution should be averse to any regulations which seemed to inter-

⁸⁰ As Hillsborough told Doddington, 'Fox really loved that man.'—Doddington, *Diary*, November 17, 1752.

⁸¹ Walpole to Mann, July 12, 1753, *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 165.

⁸² Rigby to Bedford, June 2, 1753.

fere with their passions and sanguine pursuits ; but it was very extraordinary to see grave and solemn persons turn a law so necessary for the public good into an engine of dark intrigue and faction, and into an occasion of forming a party and trying its strength.' After expatiating on the profligate principles supported by the enemies of the bill, and acknowledging the kindness of those who had defended its author in the face of the storm, he turned again to strike the Secretary-at-War. 'I despise the invective,' he exclaimed, 'and I despise the retraction. I despise the scurrility (for scurrility I must call it), and I reject the adulation.' He then closed with a warning against those candidates for power, who had shown their contempt for law, and who, if they ever attained to power, would be likely to prefer force to order and even subvert the constitution.⁸³

The admonition may have invited the charge of exaggeration, but the warmth behind it needed no apology. As for Fox, the prorogation of Parliament prevented the retorts his anger prompted, but that same evening, having already been apprised of the Chancellor's tirade, he declared to a circle of his friends in the Lower House that he would have made ample return, if the session were not at an end.

With regard to the impression created by the quarrel—especially upon the King—accounts differ

⁸³ Birch to Yorke, June 9, 1753 : Harris, *Life of Hardwicke* II. 490.

widely ; ⁸⁴ but however undisturbed His Majesty may really have been at an insult to Newcastle's friend, Charles Yorke was probably correct when he wrote that the King told his father, ' he never had done righter in his life '. ⁸⁵ Meanwhile Pelham strove to reconcile the two enemies—with, apparently, small success. ⁸⁶

The report that Fox was to be dismissed ⁸⁷ was, of course, an absurdity, when we measure the importance of his abilities to the Ministry. But from the standpoint of political expediency, Fox had certainly committed one of the gravest errors of his career. There is evidence to show that Hardwicke never forgave the insult, and when the

⁸⁴ According to Chesterfield, Fox carried his complaint to the King, who retorted that the aggression had come from him ; and then Fox, to soothe the Ministers, invited them to Holland House.—Chesterfield to Stanhope, June 23, 1753 : *Corres. of Chesterfield*, III. 862. Walpole, on the other hand, gives us a very different picture : Fox was induced by Cumberland to present his own version to the King, who received him graciously, and believed his assertion that he was not indulging in intrigues or politically connected with Bedford (that is, in league with the Opposition) ; and then, after condemning the intrigues which had undermined Walpole's power, Fox was so far successful in his interview as to gain a favour for one of his dependents.—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 306. Probably both accounts are exaggerated. Certainly Walpole would have known that Fox had entertained the Ministers if that story had been true.

⁸⁵ Harris, II. 498.

⁸⁶ Pelham acknowledged to Fox that he knew neither would forgive the other.—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 304–5.

⁸⁷ Walpole to Montagu, June 11, 1753 : *Letters*, III. 163.

death of Pelham severed the link between the Administration and the Cumberland Party, Fox's prestige was not enhanced by the growing influence of the Chancellor.

But at present Fox had lost no perceptible ground; and in general he took care to impress the Ministry with his loyalty. Thus when his brother-in-law,⁸⁸ the Earl of Kildare (reputedly a political protégé of Fox⁸⁹), begged support for his party in Ireland, he met with a cold response. To Newcastle Fox declared that he 'was not and would not be in any cabal against the Minister.' The Duke thought he added 'at any time' but was uncertain.⁹⁰

The Duke of Dorset, having outlived much of his usefulness, and having begun his lieutenancy in Ireland with his son, Lord George Sackville, as his secretary, had endured two years of uninterrupted struggles and intrigues. The conceit and inexperience of Lord George made him a ready instrument for the machinations of Primate Stone; and the jealousy of the Archbishop, as well as the overweening pride of the Speaker, converted the Government of Ireland into a seething furnace of dissension. With the Speaker was closely connected the Primate's bitterest enemy, the Earl of Kildare,

⁸⁸ Kildare had married Lady Emily Lennox, his wife's sister.

⁸⁹ Armagh to Newcastle, May 26, 1752: *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, XX. 514.

⁹⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 3, 1753: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 110.

who conjectured naturally that his connexion with Fox could give him weight at Whitehall, and accordingly hastened across to England in the winter of 1753-4 to gain a hearing for his cause.

Fox told Pelham that the King seemed to dislike the Irish Lord intensely, and had desired him to restrain Kildare from asking an audience which His Majesty felt he had no right to expect.⁹¹ Fox consulted the First Lord as to the advisability of speaking himself to the King in his brother-in-law's behalf; but Pelham's advice was that Kildare should conduct his own business, although he suspected that the Earl's brother-in-law might be coaching him in the matter. Still he seemed confident in Fox's loyalty, and believed his professions of friendship.⁹²

Finding himself in more or less disfavour, Kildare disclaimed any representation of party interest, and having written assurances that he had never expected an audience with the King,⁹³ he succeeded in allaying the suspicions of the Ministers.

⁹¹ The King preferred that Kildare should submit his business to the Ministers. This decision would, of course, be displeasing to Kildare, who wanted to complain of the Ministers themselves. See Lecky, *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, I. 465. The English Government had long been in the habit of exploiting Ireland as a source of wealth, or—possibly we may say—political plunder.

⁹² Pelham to Newcastle, January 7, 1754: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, II. 495.

⁹³ 'The King said to Mr. Fox that he thought Lord Kildare could not expect to be very well received.'—Note in the handwriting of Newcastle's secretary: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 121.

Pelham hinted broadly that consultation with Fox had instigated the politic move, but, there being no longer a disposition to distrust the Earl's sincerity, the Ministers sent him back with carefully-worded consolation.⁹⁴

Fox managed often to throw off the cares of his department and to forget the innkeepers of Lewes or the abuse of Edinburgh Castle long enough to entertain lavishly at Holland House, which he had rented in 1749, and which was becoming more and more a sphere of political influence. Not unnaturally was Fox pleased with being the leader of a party that owned Cumberland for its patron and was honoured in the ranks by men like Sandwich, Bedford, Marlborough and the Gowers. Williams could inspire them with his wit, Rigby employ his trickery in the cause, and Hillsborough lend his house to further their unity. Lord Albemarle and the young Duke of Richmond might perhaps be reckoned in the number; and Devonshire, despite his friendship for the First Lord, was a promising possibility now that Hartington had become attached to Fox. Even the Duke of Grafton, whose devotion to the Pelhams had never been questioned until a misunderstanding over Kildare,⁹⁵ was commonly believed to be in sympathy with the ever-widening circle.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Pelham to Newcastle, January 8, 1754: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, II. 496.

⁹⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 3, 1753.

⁹⁶ See Doddington, *Diary*, March 7, 1754.

Was it then strange that Fox should have begun to try his wings in view of soaring higher when opportunity offered ? Indeed if credence is to be placed in Walpole, he was fully conscious of the strength he was amassing. Shortly after the episode of the Marriage Act, he had said to the Duke of Cumberland, ' If they turn me out,⁹⁷ I shall not acquit Mr. Pelham, nor shall I spare him. Let him raise up Murray ; Mr. Pelham knows he has betrayed him, but is willing to forget it. I know he fears me still more ; he has often told me I was like Mr. Pulteney. It may be vanity, but I am stronger than Murray, I am stronger than Mr. Pelham.' ⁹⁸

Such alleged assertions, even though perhaps a trifle exaggerated, at least reflect the turnings of an independent mind that awaits, but chafes at having to await a higher plane for its activity. It is in fact only too easy to surmise that the Secretary-at-War was not loth to picture in his mind a large ' utopia ' where Henry Pelham no longer existed. True, he would not oppose the latter while he lived, but ' if accidents should happen ', he ' pretended to succeed ' ; and meanwhile he ' should endeavour to be next, and consider himself as such '.⁹⁹ Perhaps this avowal of his pretensions would have sufficed without the scheming. At all events—whether or not Fox feared the Pelham contingent

⁹⁷ We have already noted the rumour that he was to be dismissed.

⁹⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 305.

⁹⁹ Doddington, *Diary*, November 27, 1752.

(whom such boldness must certainly have put on their guard)—Lord Waldegrave speaks positively of his efforts to ensure his own succession while Pelham was still alive, and adds that more support would have been given him by his friends, ‘if, instead of snatching at the succession, he had coolly awaited until it had been delivered into his hands’.¹⁰⁰

Yet we must not imagine that the Cumberlands—albeit the strongest—were the only political element to compete with the Pelham interest for the leadership of the Whigs or the capture of the ‘succession’. We know that Doddington had urged the Princess to reconstruct the party of Leicester House,¹⁰¹ and we have reason to suppose not only that she accepted the suggestion but that she quickly enticed the Tories who had deserted in 1751 into returning once again to the accustomed camp of disaffection. Finally there were the Pittites—Barrington, Potter, Wilkes, the Townshends, George and Richard Grenville (now Earl Temple), Sir George and Sir Richard Lyttelton, and lastly Pitt himself—always ready to fling themselves into any programme that seemed politically promising. It was said that they had planned to form an opposition as soon as Pelham should die, but that Lyttelton had unwittingly betrayed the secret.¹⁰² Apparently Pitt and his

¹⁰⁰ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 24.

¹⁰¹ Doddington, *Diary*, January 25, 1753.

¹⁰² This is on Shelburne’s authority and probably correct.—Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, I. 74–5.

party were studiously biding their time. Indeed since all his devoted cringing to Newcastle had yet not availed to secure him the succession to Bedford, Pitt had given up talking in Parliament, and must simply await events before determining a new move.

The Marriage Act was not the only important measure discussed by Parliament in 1753, but our records of Fox's activity are scanty and unsatisfactory.¹⁰³ The new year, which gave promise of being dull and uneventful, was soon to take on a different guise. On Wednesday, March 6, the word went abroad that Henry Pelham was dead. He had been in poor health for some time, but was thought much improved, until a sudden relapse had ended the Minister's career. His peaceful parting with the world at early dawn seemed altogether incongruous with the struggles for his mantle when day was ushered in; yet without doubt it exemplified the need of just such a man in the period in which he had been Minister. Henry Pelham could never have ruled by personality or magnetism, but he had been a past-master in the art of compromise, and such a rôle had proved adequate to the needs of the time. Yet the essentially material character of Pelham's

¹⁰³ Evidence is confined to Doddington, *Diary* (February 1, 1753, and March 7, 1754), and was written chiefly to indicate Fox's tendency to play fast and loose with Pelham. We have no record of any part that he took on the Jew Bill—a measure which the First Lord eventually abandoned through his lack of political courage in the face of opposition.

attitude toward his fellow men had generated as little love as it had stimulated little of enmity ; and grief for the departed Minister was speedily forgotten in the greed of faction to grasp his power.

Pelham had died about six in the morning. Before eight Fox was at his friend Hartington's, to exact his active assistance. Likewise early in the morning he sought out Pitt, whose endorsement might prove valuable in the eyes of many. Nor was Newcastle unsolicited, or Hardwicke unconciliated ; and the latter's spiteful pen mentions ' three humiliating and apologizing messages that came within a few hours after Mr. Pelham's eyes were closed.'¹⁰⁴ The Chancellor had neither forgiven nor forgotten.

It is clear that Fox was making a most active canvass for the post he felt that he merited.¹⁰⁵ Many might nurture hopes, but none stood in so enviable a position as he. Was he not the legitimate successor of Walpole and Pelham ? Who was there whose services had been more valued in the Lower House ? Who better understood the inner workings of that system that produced

¹⁰⁴ Hardwicke to the Archbishop of Canterbury, March 11, 1754 : Harris, II. 511 ; Hardwicke to Pitt, April 2, 1754 ; Pitt to Grenville, March 11, 1754 ; Doddington, *Diary*, March 14, 1754.

¹⁰⁵ Walpole must certainly have been thinking of the days following, when he wrote that Fox ' acted reserve and retirement and expected to be wooed '.—*Memoirs*, I. 330. It is possible that Fox confined his efforts to one day of campaigning, and then kept in the background for fear of overdoing it.

infallible majorities ? Who, in fine, could boast of confidence from both the great wings of the Whig party ? With such advantages in hand, Fox could not but declare that the place ' was but his due, and he would give way to no one '.¹⁰⁶

But ere another day was done, Fox found himself in no wise the only combatant in this ' war of succession '. Two men were for a time on people's lips almost as much as the Secretary-at-War ; they were Murray, the Solicitor-General, and the never-to-be-forgotten Paymaster.

In solid intelligence and dignity the former knew no superior ; he was likewise a master of the ingenuities of debate, and in some respects surpassed even Fox in the art of convincing the wavering voters. But his distinctly judicial mind would be naturally regarded as incompatible with the manifold qualities required by a chief minister, and his personal popularity was impaired by a Scottish birth and a quasi-Tory reputation.

Pitt's candidature, like Murray's, was tolerably passive, so far as the man himself was concerned. It was inconsistent with his *animus superbus* to revive his smothered hopes or even recall some pleasant obligations ; and as a consequence the devoted satellites of the talented orator seemed strangely indifferent to the gossip that was mouthed by the idlers at White's. But even if his importance had been at that time appreciated, the uncertainty of Pitt's health was a reasonable

¹⁰⁶ Doddington, *Diary*, March 7, 1754.

objection, while still more serious was the royal ban with which his youthful impetuosity had been punished.

While the Cumberland Party naturally pushed the claims of Fox, Leicester House was represented in the arena by (Dr.) Sir George Lee, Treasurer of the Prince's Household, an upright and 'unexceptionable man', who had come over to the Administration with the tacit approval of the Princess, and as he had offended no one then, it would, as Walpole remarked, offend no one now, if having been awarded the post he were ever turned out.¹⁰⁷ The Princess might have found a weapon in Murray for resisting the Cumberlands, but the Solicitor-General was not of the party of Leicester House, and her treasurer would be a likelier tool. Other names mentioned with more or less frequency were Speaker Onslow, Henry Legge (Treasurer of the Navy), Sir George Lyttelton and George Grenville (leading members of the Paymaster's faction), and two friends of Newcastle, Lords Dupplin and Barnard.¹⁰⁸ These were never active aspirants, nor in the front rank of speculation like Fox, Murray, Pitt, or Lee.

The choice designated by public opinion was certainly Fox. He was the 'ablest man in

¹⁰⁷ Walpole to Mann, March 7, 1754: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 216.

¹⁰⁸ Ilchester to Digby, March 11, 1744: MSS. of G. W. Digby, Esq., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII, app., part 1, p. 329.

Parliament, had acted steadily with the Whigs, and had in their eyes the seeming right of succession'.¹⁰⁹ On the 8th Chesterfield writes what he has just heard and believes—that Fox is to succeed Pelham as First Commissioner of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. His Lordship adds that he is not sorry at the promotion, and exquisitely commends the prospective First Lord for a 'frank and gentlemanlike manner'.¹¹⁰

But there were several by no means trifling obstacles to Fox's prospects of success. The very fact that he represented the party of the Duke of Cumberland was an objection in the minds of the many who remembered the King's son as the 'Butcher', and were quick to raise a cry of militarism; then the Scots hated him not only for his connexion with the Duke, but also for the unforgiven part he had taken in the cases of Porteous and Anstruther, and statesmen would hesitate to offend the northern country, whose feelings were already so deeply wounded; thirdly, the lawyers remembered his violent attacks in the regency and marriage controversies, and the Chancellor's opinion was no small factor in influencing the whole body; lastly—and again an ill result of his patron's backing—the efforts of Leicester House would be employed against him to the bitter end. The Princess believed and

¹⁰⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 329.

¹¹⁰ Chesterfield to Stanhope, March 8, 1754: *Corres. of Chesterfield*, III. 1089.

feared that he would win the desired succession, and did not disguise the intensity of her hatred.¹¹¹ She was not aware then that Fox had tried to meddle in her household¹¹²—the personal detestation was yet to come; but it was enough now that Cumberland, her mortal enemy, would lurk behind the throne—such a prospect was not to be endured.

We should now turn to consider the sentiments of the Pelham interest, which after all, whatever the feelings of kings or princes, was still the paramount element. His Majesty had announced early that he had no favourite to nominate,¹¹³ and submitted the choice to the Cabinet, only stipulating that Devonshire's vote should be added to those of the others;¹¹⁴ and the Duke was forthwith summoned from Derbyshire,—a proceeding which somewhat retarded the settlement.¹¹⁵ The King had also added grimly—with a thought perhaps

¹¹¹ Doddington, *Diary*, March 9, 1754; Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 22; Walpole to Mann, March 7, 1754, *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 216.

¹¹² The Princess did not hear of this until after Hanbury Williams's death, in 1759. Walpole tells us that Fox had written a confidential account of the affair to Williams; and when the latter's papers came into the hands of his brother, the letter was for some reason communicated to the Princess.—Walpole, *Memoirs of George III*, IV. 92 n.

¹¹³ Hardwicke to Canterbury, March 11, 1754: Harris, II. 511.

¹¹⁴ Hardwicke to Pitt, April 2, 1754: Phillimore, *Memoirs of Lyttelton*, II. 457.

¹¹⁵ Digby to 'Neddy', March 11, 1754: MSS. of G. W. Digby, Esq., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

of the obnoxious Paymaster—that he hoped they would not think of recommending any one who had ‘flown in his face’. Hardwicke perceived, or thought he perceived, a lurking partiality for Fox in the royal mind.¹¹⁶ At any rate the Chancellor was not idle while his friend mourned, and he saw in Fox’s prospective triumph a serious—perhaps an almost fatal—consequence. When it was reflected that a new election was drawing nigh, it was clear that Fox knew too much;¹¹⁷ and where talent works as magic, it is important to have it on the right side. Just how much Newcastle was privy to these cogitations does not appear; but Devonshire, arriving late on the 9th,¹¹⁸ was astounded by the offer of the Treasury with all the support that he could want. This the old Duke had the good sense to decline.¹¹⁹

The Chancellor had been apparently contemplating a division of the spoils. Some trusted peer might have the greater office, while—if the seals of the Exchequer were thought too great a fall in hopes—the King might confer upon Fox the Secretaryship of the less important department of the South, which Holderness now held. By such a shuffling of the leading posts, the Duke of

¹¹⁶ Hardwicke to Canterbury, March 11, 1754.

¹¹⁷ ‘To have the plan of elections in safe hands (wrote Hardwicke) was the *immediate fundamental object*’.—Hardwicke to Canterbury, March 11, 1754.

¹¹⁸ Ilchester to Digby, March 11, 1754.

¹¹⁹ Hardwicke to Canterbury, March 11, 1754.

Newcastle would slide into the vacant headship of the Treasury.¹²⁰

Pitt, meanwhile, was venturing a few comments of his own. Fox, he admitted, held the highest qualifications, both in seniority and talent, for the seals of the Exchequer. Dr. Lee, however, would not be a poor selection for the post, although Grenville would be his own preference, if it were his right to nominate. Still another alternative would be to 'secularize the Solicitor-General'. In all this, not a word of his own ambition. Still more significant was the omission of all mention of the greater of the two offices. Was he hoping that his friends would detect a hint without the unpleasant condescension of importuning them outright ?¹²¹

¹²⁰ Such is the substance of the Chancellor's ideas, as expressed in his letter to the Archbishop.—Ibid. As regards the object of Fox (to become First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer) Chesterfield cleverly remarks that the Newcastles chose rather to 'kick him up-stairs into Secretary of State'.—Chesterfield to Stanhope, March 15, 1754: *Chesterfield Corres.* (ed. Bradshaw), II. 1090.

¹²¹ The conduct which Pitt prescribed for his little following is also worthy of attention. It would seem that the betrayal of their hostile intentions (p. 142) had not only dissuaded him from putting the plan into execution, but determined him to enforce a doubly cautious neutrality on his party. Chiefly (he writes) ought they to aim at strengthening the Princess against the King's demise (a significant remark, since it would seem to indicate that Pitt had come to place more hope in the quarter which he had once deserted for the sake of serving the Pelhams than he now reposed in the ungrateful Newcastle). As for their behaviour they should be careful not to 'talk big',

On the 10th the whole city was sure that Fox would win the coveted prize, and his nephew believed that he thought so himself, though in what way it would be given he could not guess.¹²² Pitt had predicted that such would be the outcome,¹²³ and Murray brought his candidature to an

or in any way be thought to 'utter threats'; nevertheless they should show themselves keenly aware of the 'foul play' which had been dealt them in the Closet (an evident thrust at Newcastle); and whilst they must not declare themselves free because of Pelham's death, they should 'look about and fish in troubled waters, and perhaps help trouble them in order to fish the better'. The importance of his health they were inclined to over-estimate (is this another hint?), and he would see them in person as soon as possible, as letters were a poor substitute. Meanwhile there was strength in unity, and they themselves had the health to act (doubtless another hint). He particularly cautioned them not to let any one sound them without authority to make offers; but in the meantime it would be well for Temple to surround himself with the party at dinners (evidently a design to assure the Newcastles of the unity of the little faction), and also to entertain both the family of the Chancellor on the one hand and the courtiers of the Prince of Wales on the other. Grenville's time would certainly come, he felt; for 'Fox is odious and will have difficulty to stand at some future time'. The only associate of whom (for obvious reasons) Pitt felt some distrust, was Sir George Lyttelton, and he wished that an allusion to Newcastle's 'feebleness' should not be reported to Sir George.—Pitt to Lyttelton and the Grenvilles, March 7, 1754; Pitt to Temple, March 7, 1754; Pitt to Temple, March 11, 1754: *Grenville Papers*, I. 106, 111, 112.

¹²² Digby to Digby, March 11, 1754: MSS. of G. W. Digby, Esq., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

¹²³ That is, Pitt predicted that Fox would become Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Pitt to Temple, March 7, 1754. We have noticed that he carefully omitted all mention of the Treasury.

end, assuring Fox through Stone that he had no wish for the honour.¹²⁴

But the Scots were still rampant and Ilchester heard on the 10th that Argyll and others had induced Newcastle to bid for the place himself. Various plans were talked of, such as Fox for Chancellor of the Exchequer, or Secretary of State, with Newcastle in the Treasury ; but the Duke's acceptance in the former case ' would depend upon whether power was lodged in the First Lord of the Treasury or in the Chancellor '.¹²⁵ Nothing could be guessed at, Fox said, until Newcastle had conferred with the King, who as yet had seen no ' plan '.¹²⁶

Meanwhile, for Newcastle and his friends, it was anything to beat Fox. ' You know my opinion of that gentleman,' was Hardwicke's comment in writing to Pitt later of the affair.¹²⁷ Fox might get relatives to send condolences to the bereaved brother, but the sting of being asked a favour on the day of mourning was a hard thing even for the man who gloried in his benefactions ;¹²⁸ and Fox's own activity had shown a marked lack of poignant sorrow.

¹²⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 330.

¹²⁵ Ilchester to Digby, March 11, 1754.

¹²⁶ Digby to ' Neddy ', March 11, 1754.

¹²⁷ Hardwicke to Pitt, April 2, 1754.

¹²⁸ It was probably through a delay in the post that Newcastle had received an application from one of the Digbys on the day that Pelham died. Fox could only hope that a letter of condolence would atone for the seeming lack of consideration. —Digby to ' Neddy ', March 11, 1754.

It is said that the motive for keeping the heartless aspirant from gaining the Treasury was to offer him a lower office, which he would be bound to refuse, and would in that way arouse the resentment of the King,¹²⁹ who was in reality the chief element to be feared. After all, could it be imagined that the man who lurked behind the scenes of strife, yet was conscious all the while that the headship had been his in all but name for eleven years, would not determine that in some way the prize should remain in his family? Surely not, when his trusted friend and confidant was able and willing to secure his triumph!

Hardwicke knew that His Majesty should be the one to confer the honour, but he feared that such would be too great a risk, unless the royal servant should do as he were told.¹³⁰ Judging, in fact, from his manœuvre with the Archbishop of Canterbury,¹³¹ we can readily imagine how skilfully the affair was managed. When the Cabinet met on the momentous evening of the 12th of March, the astute lawyer read an announcement that His

¹²⁹ Doddington, *Diary*, March 14, 1754.

¹³⁰ Hardwicke to Pitt, April 2, 1754.

¹³¹ The Archbishop being unable to attend the crucial meeting of the Cabinet on the morrow, Hardwicke wrote to him a long letter (Harris, II. 511), entering fully into the Newcastle programme, and even dictating an 'ostensible' letter (as he expressed it) which the Archbishop should send to be read at the meeting. Nor did Hardwicke stop there. He not only begged his friend to send also a 'separate private letter', but went so far as to instruct him in the manner of framing it.

Majesty had decided to separate the offices which Pelham had held, that then he had 'cast his eyes upon' the Duke of Newcastle for First Commissioner of the Treasury, and Henry Legge for Chancellor of the Exchequer; finally Fox should be Secretary of State for the department of the South.¹³² That the poll taken was unanimous for the nominees is hardly necessary to mention. Newcastle himself had had the delicacy to be absent from the meeting.

Thus the result of the hard-fought struggle was what any observer of Cabinet subservience or Newcastle methods during the last decade could not have reasonably failed to expect. Hartington, to whom the *dénouement* may possibly have been a surprise, had been the one selected to negotiate with Fox; and the Marquis had already been specially commissioned by Newcastle—in anticipation of the Cabinet meeting—to promise Fox the management of the House of Commons with a disposal of some of the offices and the most minute intelligence of how the secret-service money should be spent (although the expenditure of the latter as well as most of the parliamentary patronage should be reserved for the First Lord). He added also his personal wish that Fox would consent.¹³³

¹³² Succeeding Holderness, who was transferred to the department of the North.—Minute of meeting, Powis House, March 12, 1754: Add. MSS., 35870, f. 245.

¹³³ Digby to Digby, March 14, 1754, MSS. of G. W. Digby; Walpole to Bentley, March 17, 1754: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 291.

Fox was frank in announcing that he did not comply with willingness and had never sought the office ¹³⁴ (too ironically true!), but accepted the Seals next morning, Hartington having already apprised the Duke of his success.¹³⁵ Thus Fox was to be lifted from the War Office to a post of commanding importance.

But the new Secretary had failed to secure the greater prize—failed because he had no influence in the Cabinet, and because his credit with the King was not strong enough to intervene in his favour. Perhaps his ducal chief had taken too much for granted and had not played upon the King's affections. Perhaps, too, His Majesty had really thought that Fox would be the choice and so had left the selection to the Cabinet, only to find that the Cabinet meant the Newcastle interest, and that he himself was to be their instrument.

¹³⁴ Digby to Digby, March 14, 1754. Fox's chief consolation seemed to be the fact that the Newcastles apparently intended to exclude Egmont. Yet, in spite of his disappointment, we can see from the tone of his letter to Digby on the 12th that he felt no little pleasure at the prospect of becoming Secretary of State. That he realized that his own fitness lay in the direction of the Treasury rather than the Foreign Office is perfectly clear; but that was but one aspect of his new promotion. The entire management of the House of Commons, and the feeling that he might strengthen his own interest by the use which he should make of the offices at his disposal, were arguments quite sufficient to prevent him from sulking over Newcastle's victory. The more important object of his ambition was still open to him.

¹³⁵ Hartington to Newcastle, March 11, 1754: Add. MSS. 32734, f. 218.

Against such odds the Cumberlands had but little chance.

But the Newcastles could afford to be magnanimous. The next day, under the auspices of Lord Hartington, a reconciliation was patched up between the Chancellor and the new Secretary-elect, whatever reservations the latter may have allowed himself from ever acting heartily with his old enemy. In the meantime the secret council of two had sent Stone to assure the Princess of the necessity of the unwelcome promotion.¹³⁶

Despite the failure of his main endeavour, Fox's credit had but little diminished since he made an enemy of the man who had just found ample revenge. He might be invited, in time to come, to that very post which he had now failed to obtain ; but it was only now that he was appointed to a high office of state through a general recognition of his ability and by virtue of a reputation not as yet shattered by his own rapacity or cunning.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 28, 1755: Add. MSS. 35415, f. 80.

¹³⁷ 'He has some faults,' writes Waldegrave (a very impartial observer) 'but more good qualities ; is a man of sense and judgement notwithstanding some indiscretion, and with small allowance for ambition, party, and politics, is a warm friend, a man of veracity, and a man of honour.'—*Memoirs*, p. 25.

CHAPTER III

PERFIDY AND REVENGE

NEWCASTLE at last held the reins of power tightly in his grasp. That he had himself been behind the scenes directing his own cause, can be strongly suspected, if not perhaps proved ; but at all events, thanks to his faithful friend, the Chancellor, he had triumphed over all the factions that would have robbed him of his heritage—he was supreme ! No longer had he a niggardly brother in control of the exchequer of the State, grudging a subsidy or siding with an iniquitous Secretary. There was no one to emulate his preponderance in the Closet, and the two troublesome parties of Cumberland and Leicester House were for the moment subdued. Nothing seemed, at first thought, to hinder the inauguration of an absolutism that was so near and dear to his heart.

In the selection of Legge for Chancellor of the Exchequer the Duke felt that he could not have hit upon a more efficient tool for the subsidiary office. The son of Lord Dartmouth had a knowledge of finance that would amply compensate for the First Lord's lack of experience, and being a *parvenu* in the political world, he was scarcely to be thought of as unpleasantly ambitious. As for

Holderness, he had proved himself to be of one mind, and that was the Duke's.

There was only one spot in his self-appointed absolutism which Newcastle believed might be dangerously vulnerable, and that was the new Secretary of State. Long experience had taught the new commander that monopoly, and that alone, could render his control of foreign affairs a positive certainty and lull the suspicions of his jealous mind. The past spoke eloquently; unsympathetic co-operation had been a motive for Townshend's resignation in 1730;¹ it was the undoing of four who followed in his steps, Granville, Harrington, Chesterfield and Bedford—a quartet of widely different dispositions and mentalities, but all, in more or less degree, conspirators against the exercise of tyranny, and all had bowed their necks to the Pelham ascendancy. Now, more than ever, if he were still to dispense his blessings to foreign princes, he must have a man as Secretary of State who would be his pawn and nothing else. Could he trust Fox?

Still another misgiving harassed his mind. He had agreed to impart the secrets of his elaborate system of corruption; he was to share them with the one who of all men was oldest and shrewdest in the traffic, and who headed a party that knew no loyalty to Ministers, now that Henry Pelham was dead. Beyond a doubt he would be adding to the

¹ Walpole to Newcastle, December 26, 1754: Brit. Mus., Add. MSS., 32737, f. 491.

power of one who already had a prodigious following in the Commons and a predominating influence in the patronage at the War Office.² Would it be wise, then, to deposit those precious instruments of power with the man who had striven in vain for the Treasury ?

The answer seemed inevitably negative. The Duke of Newcastle was not the man to begin his career of omnipotence with a palpable weakness. A long night's brooding over the frailties of his political contemporaries had left him unconvinced that all would join hands in leaving him supreme, and the man who must be given his first lesson in ministerial submissiveness was Henry Fox.

After the Chancellor's absolution had been tendered under a veil of polished platitudes, Hartington brought his friend to Newcastle House where an evening conference had been appointed as a personal guaranty of the terms delivered by messenger. The power-loving Duke was always a gracious host and this was the initiation of a quondam foe. But no sooner had the conversation turned to particular conditions, than the treaty seemed at once a fantasy and the initiation a surrender.

Fox mentioned the secret-service money. Newcastle told him that his brother had never imparted

² Waldegrave states that Fox 'had the distribution of military preferments, which added greatly to his strength by furnishing the means of gratifying his dependents'.—*Memoirs*, p. 21.

the intelligence of its disposal. Fox at once disclaimed any intention to lay hands on a penny of it, but if he were to have the absolute direction of the House of Commons, he must know who had been 'gratified' and who had not; for how otherwise could he speak to the members without appearing ridiculous? It was mere mockery when the Duke then averred that he would give the confidence to no one else.

'Who is to have the nomination of officers?' Fox inquired. 'I, myself,' was the reply. 'And who the recommendation?' 'Any member of the House of Commons.' Thus the promise of a share in the appointments was forgotten also.

Fox then asked concerning the list of members to be assisted in the coming election, which to his knowledge Pelham had bequeathed. 'I will come,' he proposed, 'and look it over with Your Grace.' 'No,' the Duke answered, 'I will look it over with Lord Dupplin, and then show it to you.'³

Such shuffling clearly showed that Newcastle was determined to break his word. He did not, indeed he could not deny, in the presence of Lord Hartington, the terms of the offer he had made through the latter; but 'he endeavoured

³ He did so on the 15th.—Memorandum, Newcastle House, November 15, 1754: Add. MSS., 32995, f. 69. Details of the interview between Newcastle and Fox are given in Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 331-2; Doddington, *Diary*, March 15, 1754.

to palliate, explain, and excuse himself: that his anxiety of mind, the affliction of his family, and grief for the loss of his brother had quite disordered his memory; that possibly he might have expressed his meaning in improper words; but certainly it could not have been his intention to give Fox that share of power which he now claimed.' ⁴ Such was the violence of a man who would quake at the consequences.

Hartington was unreserved in his condemnation of the perfidy, and angrily declared that he would 'never have anything to say to His Grace'.⁵ But Fox's resentment lay deeper. He was too discerning a politician not to see that Newcastle thought that his favourite game was in danger, and he was likewise aware that he had been duped by one of his own profession, however greatly inferior in intelligence and force. Yet the offer had been once so tempting that Fox was still a restless prey to indecision; ⁶ he was eager to show his skill in management; his spirit was restless with ambition. But he had never yet been,

⁴ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 19.

⁵ H. Digby to Lord Digby, March 14, 1754: MSS. of G. W. Digby, Esq., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII, App., part 1, p. 222. Walpole being ever ready to misrepresent the men whom he disliked, the testimony of Fox's cousin is more to be trusted than the former's statement that Hartington 'expressed no resentment'. Even according to Walpole His Lordship remonstrated with Newcastle and insisted that the Duke's stand was contrary to the message he had received. —*Memoirs*, I. 332.

⁶ *Ibid.*

for the sake of advancement, the tool of any man—much less of one whom he despised. He had no doubt the foresight to see that ambition itself, in such a guise, would soon be smothered.⁷

In this frame of mind, while Hartington was informing the Chancellor, and probably trying in vain to commit him, Fox was enjoying the counsels of his party. The Duke of Cumberland would have him throw up so doubtful an honour; the younger Walpole was even more vehement in his arraignment of the would-be autocrat, and impressed upon his friend the danger of being detached from his party after all power had been curtailed;⁸ but a letter from Williams, written in haste about midnight, imploring him in the strongest terms not to yield to such abuse, seemed, as Lady Caroline afterwards reported, to be the factor that clinched his determination.⁹

The following day, the 14th, Fox wrote to Newcastle, requesting him to obtain the King's permission for declining the Seals, since, in view of the contradiction of the terms first offered, he

⁷ Fox had expected the entire management of the Commons—which would have reconciled him in a measure to his disappointment in failing to gain the Treasury. But under the revised conditions he would have been simply a subordinate—and that without the means of acting with efficiency.

⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 334.

⁹ The letter was eight or nine pages long, so Sir Charles must have felt strongly on the subject.—Ilchester to Digby, March 23, 1754: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII. Walpole mentions Williams's efforts, and seems, on the whole, to be pretty well informed as to this whole affair.

could not be answerable for His Majesty's affairs in the House of Commons.¹⁰ The letter before being sent was submitted to Hartington, who said 'there was not a word too much, and it would be justified everywhere'.¹¹ Newcastle's reply was sent the next day, expressed extreme concern, but went into no particulars.¹² Hardwicke wrote to his friend, 'Do what one can, some people will lie.'¹³

All who voiced their sentiments—Henry Legge and Lord Ilchester excepted¹⁴—seemed to feel that the short-lived Secretary had taken the noble course. The Speaker declared that he had acted with great honour, and could not have done differently.¹⁵ A note in Fox's own hand (in a letter of Digby's) evinced the resentment he plainly felt: 'Harry has given so particular an account that I will only say that I would not be a shabby dog¹⁶ to be the King of France, and I *will not* be Secretary of State.'¹⁷

¹⁰ The letter is given in full in Walpole, *Memoirs*, I. 334–5.

¹¹ Fox to Digby, March 14, 1754, *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

¹² Newcastle to Fox, March 14, 1754: *Add. MSS.*, 32734, f. 245.

¹³ Hardwicke to Newcastle, March 18, 1754: *ibid.* f. 269.

¹⁴ Fox's brother was more likely to think of a lost chance of obtaining an earldom than to consider the politician's standpoint.

¹⁵ Digby to Digby, March 14, 1754: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

¹⁶ This was a favourite expression of Fox's; see *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 116 n.

¹⁷ PS. in Fox's hand, letter of Digby to Digby, March 14, 1754.

One of Fox's first steps after his resignation was to call on Lady Yarmouth, who received a copy of his letter to Newcastle and promised to show it to the King. She graciously expressed her regret at what had happened,¹⁸ and the Secretary-elect might have been tempted to believe that the Minister's action was condemned in the Closet.

On the 15th, on Newcastle's invitation, Fox and Hartington repaired to the Chancellor's, where an effort was made to explain away former promises and institute a settlement. But civilities could not efface the past, and, as the First Lord was not prepared to make material repentance, the conference broke up after three hours with nothing gained.¹⁹ It is no doubt probable that the Newcastles had been in terror lest they had raised a viper in their midst. To drive Fox into opposition had not been a part of their programme; and yet such a result was eminently possible. Chesterfield, a careful observer *extra arenam*, evidently expected that such would be the case, and that ample would be the opportunity for revenge.²⁰ But Fox was doubtful if such a course would enhance his prospects. The Duke of Bedford had tried it, and was he not out of

¹⁸ Digby to Digby, March 14, 1754.

¹⁹ Fox having declined to accept the Newcastle interpretation of the word 'management'.—Ilchester to Digby, March 18, 1754: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

²⁰ Chesterfield to Stanhope, March 15, 1754: *Corres. of Chesterfield*, III. 1090.

everything? And such men as Egmont, his inveterate foe,²¹ would be in the group with whom he would have to work. No, there were better chances of revenge while still a member of the Administration. To force his pretensions upon the man whose innate folly was bound sooner or later to drive him to the brink of ruin—such was a longer but a shrewder game.

So on the 16th, having asked an audience with the King, Fox announced his desire to remain Secretary-at-War.²² His Majesty had already read the famous letter to Newcastle, which had been handed to him by the Chancellor in an audience on the day it was received (March 14).²³ He did not press Fox to reconsider his determination, but gently reproached him for ingratitude to himself, adding that his visitor had expected too much.

‘Perhaps, Sir,’ replied Fox, ‘I did ask too much; but they were more in fault, who promised and broke their word; Lord Hartington is witness. I shall speak with truth, not with modesty. I might be a great man in the House of Commons, if I would be Secretary of State at the head of an Opposition—but I prefer serving Your Majesty as a private man, without seeing the Duke of Newcastle. He promised me his confidence. I never

²¹ See chapter ii, note 134.

²² Walpole to Bentley, March 17, 1754: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 219.

²³ Digby to Digby, March 14, 1754: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

can believe him more. I am honest ; he is not.' ²⁴ Privately Fox remarked that he hoped and believed he had gained in public esteem by his action, and to have accepted the seat would have been the part of a knave and a fool. ²⁵

Meanwhile the Ministry of Newcastle had received its final organization. In Sir Thomas Robinson, Master of the Wardrobe and sometime Ambassador to Vienna, the Duke found the humble instrument he desired. The latter had given promise of much ability in foreign affairs, but in managing the Commons he was only too likely to show the hand of inexperience. However, it was the Newcastle principle to employ second-rate material for offices of primary importance, and there was much wisdom ahead to be learned. Legge and his master 'did not love each other', ²⁶ and the slight which the former was given on his first appearance at the Treasury ²⁷ was something the little man would certainly seek to repay in similar coin ; but at present each had an interest at stake that required some dissembling, and the Duke was still pluming himself on having secured a faithful slave for second place at his

²⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 335-6.

²⁵ Fox to Digby, March 23, 1754: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

²⁶ Digby to Digby, March 20, 1754: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII.

²⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 340. It was unlike Newcastle to be discourteous, but Walpole may have over-coloured the account.

Board. Meanwhile the faithful Murray was promoted to succeed Sir Dudley Ryder as Attorney-General (the latter being advanced to the Chief Justiceship) ; ²⁸ and Lord Dupplin, a never-failing ally, was to be the special agent in corruption.²⁹

Nothing was offered in the way of promotion to the aggrieved Paymaster, who had complained that Fox and Legge had both been awarded priority ; although Hardwicke wrote to him that he and Newcastle had done the best they could, and with His Grace at the head of the Administration there were ' hopes '.³⁰ Meanwhile to soothe his mortification, Sir George Lyttelton was given the lucrative office of Cofferer and the latter secured for his friend, Grenville, the post which Legge had vacated. Even Charles Townshend had not appealed in vain,³¹ and if the rest of the ' Cobham cubs ' were forced to wait, it was only because the Ministry had no more blessings to bestow.³² Nor can it be assumed that such

²⁸ Left vacant by the death of Chief Justice Lee.

²⁹ Walpole to Mann, March 28, 1754: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 224.

³⁰ Hardwicke was well versed in the Newcastle habit of expecting something in return for nothing, and he took occasion to flatter Pitt on his abilities in the House of Commons. ' I will not suffer myself to doubt,' he wrote also, ' that you will continue to take an active part.'—Hardwicke to Pitt, April 6, 1754: Phillimore, II. 456.

³¹ Townshend to Newcastle, March 11, 1754: Add. MSS., 32734, f. 216. He was appointed one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

³² Barrington wrote to Newcastle to get a promise of an

generosity was wholly disinterested ; for the hope of weakening Pitt through the purchase of his following undoubtedly had place in the minds of the men who feared him.

The Cumberlands had more cause than any other faction to harbour feelings of discontent. Lord Gower being advanced in years, an effort was made, apparently with success, to induce him to resign the Privy Seal—a change especially desirable in that the Duke of Rutland, a more active member of the party, aspired to the place.³³ But Lady Gower evidently disliked the arrangement, and tried to persuade the Chancellor to act in their behalf without consulting Newcastle. The whole matter was of a delicate nature, and gossips being too much interested, a report went abroad which Hardwicke so far departed from his usual placid dignity as to pronounce a ‘ lie ’.³⁴ Newcastle, sensitive that any one should believe the Chancellor would ever act contrary to their confidential friendship, was eager to use his friend’s denunciation and was promptly rebuked by the cautious lawyer.³⁵

employment redeemed (ibid. f. 229), but learned afterward that ‘ all the employments were given away ’.—Doddington, *Diary*, March 31, 1754.

³³ Walpole to Mann, March 28, 1754: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 224.

³⁴ Memorandum, April 6, 1754: Add. MSS., 32995, f. 178.

³⁵ ‘ Putting things down in writing is something like advertising, and I may be drawn into an altercation with Lady G. about words. It is really below Your Grace, and I have stomach enough to think it below me too.’—Hardwicke to Newcastle, April 3, 1754: Add. MSS., 32735, f. 20.

Just what intricacies there were in the whole affair is hard to unravel, but the fact remains that Gower was allowed to retain his office in peace, and no new aspirant from among the Cumberlands was given advancement. Fox, as Secretary-at-War, was not a member of the Cabinet, and the Duke of Devonshire, who was becoming affiliated to the party, had long been out of active office.

Pitt was kept informed of everything by his faithful followers, Lyttelton and Grenville, and had thus received an account of Fox's letter, and all that had happened in the Ministry.³⁶ At one time it was reported that his life was in danger ;³⁷ but this chronic distemper of his was an uncertain thing with strange vagaries, and Grenville, who recorded the matter, may not have understood it. At all events the baneful malady did not prevent a spirit so ambitious from reaching out for power. His long letter to Newcastle on the 24th was a combination of humility and reproach. At the beginning was a touch of flattery ; His Grace had done wisely to take the Treasury himself, and this might lay the foundation of a system, 'so fast as not to be shaken hereafter'. But for himself, he would ask His Grace if twenty years' service had merited such treatment. Under present circumstances he could not act prominently in Parliament—his situation was too 'degraded' for such

³⁶ Doddington, *Diary*, June 10, 1754, Lyttelton to Grenville, March 18, 1754: *Grenville Papers*, I. 115.

³⁷ Grenville's narrative: *ibid.* I. 431.

services to be expected. Then, as if swept into more direct language against his will, he declared that he had flattered himself that His Grace would bring forward an 'instrument of his own', would employ the occasion at hand³⁸ to eradicate the royal displeasure, and reserve the first opening in the office of Secretary of State. Instead of that three men had been given precedence. Yet the Paymaster was merciful; he did not scruple to praise Robinson as a man of worth and ability;³⁹ the choice of Legge too he approved. After final professions of attachment and an undivided heart, the pompous effusion was brought to a close.⁴⁰

Newcastle's answers to such torrents of expostulation and remonstrance were quite too poor a balm for a pride so wounded. It is said that a coolness had sprung up between the two before Pelham's death;⁴¹ and this the Paymaster attri-

³⁸ Pelham's death is meant. Pitt had hoped for a shake-up, which would result in his obtaining some promotion.

³⁹ Later Pitt made his famous remark to Fox with regard to Sir Thomas's leadership in the Commons: 'He (Newcastle) may as well send his jack-boot to govern us.'—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 101.

⁴⁰ Pitt to Newcastle, March 24, 1754: Add. MSS., 32734, f. 322.

⁴¹ Grenville's narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 429. This was due in all probability to Pitt's disappointment in not being appointed to succeed Bedford in 1752 (see p. 95). Dr. von Ruville intimates (I. 321) that Newcastle probably strengthened the King's obstinacy toward Pitt; and such was undoubtedly the latter's meaning when he wrote of the 'foul play' in the Closet (chap. ii, note 121). But whereas it is quite true that Newcastle did not want a man of force in the

buted to his recent opposition on two points in Parliament ; ⁴² for those two ' crimes,' he contended, he was ' punished '. But had he not expiated those offences ? ⁴³ Lyttelton had told him he would ' receive some commands ', ⁴⁴ and patiently had he waited, but they had not come. In vain was his wistfulness hinted ; he had humbled himself, and yet to no purpose.

Tantalized by meaningless excuses, and yet still loth to give up hope, the mortified egotist feared that His Grace might think the gout an obstacle. This indisposition, he assured the Duke, was such

Ministry, and rightly believed (as he found to his sorrow in the case of Fox) that such a man would be ill content with a power as fettered as the Duke thought necessary, there is certainly no evidence to show that Newcastle was guilty of anything more than simply refraining from advancing Pitt's claims. Owing to the King's dislike of the Paymaster, a passive attitude was quite sufficient. Finally, we may add that both Newcastle and Pitt had too innately the characteristics of the politician to be able to inspire much mutual respect. In so far as Newcastle and Hardwicke held out false hopes or expressed an interest which was palpably insincere, we can hardly blame Pitt for distrusting them. On the other hand, how can we read these laudatory epistles of Pitt's without regarding them as the quintessence of political dissimulation ?

⁴² His conduct in the cases of the reduction of the seamen (p. 95), and of the charges against Anstruther (p. 103).

⁴³ Pitt to Newcastle, March 24, 1754. Pitt was alluding shrewdly to the support he had given Newcastle's foreign policy. We must remark that it is rather odd to think of Pitt bringing forward his defence of a system of subsidies as a reason for being granted an employment by Newcastle.

⁴⁴ Pitt to Newcastle, March 1754 : *Chatham Corres.* I. 85.

as might render him unable to perform the duties of the Exchequer, but the office of Secretary did not so much require uninterrupted health, and a successor might be appointed at any time (was this a reproach?). ‘But I own freely,’ he added, ‘that I should have thought myself much less satisfied as to my own person if Mr. Fox had been put at the head of the House of Commons by the King’s favour, than I am at present. I should in that case have been mortified for Your Grace and My Lord Chancellor—very little for myself.’⁴⁵ Such a remark was not only attempted ingratiating; it showed an unworthy satisfaction in his rival’s disappointment.

To Hardwicke’s letter,⁴⁶ which had emphasized the royal aversion in spite of determined efforts to remove it, Pitt’s reply showed the agony of despair. The weight of royal displeasure was too great; it had crushed him. ‘A decent and innocent retreat’ was all he asked now. The letter concluded with an acknowledgement of the favour to his friends and verbose apologies for his own presumption.⁴⁷ The unappreciated genius of the Pay Office had wasted words in vain.

But Pitt was not alone in his sorrow. Fox had meanwhile begun to harbour remorse. It was not pleasant to be out of the whirl, while lesser men were bustling to and fro. He might indeed have

⁴⁵ Pitt to Newcastle, April 5, 1754: *Chatham Corres.* I. 101.

⁴⁶ Phillimore, *Memoirs of Lyttelton*, I. 456.

⁴⁷ Pitt to Hardwicke, April 6, 1754: *Chatham Corres.* I. 103.

accepted the second conditions, had they been anterior to the first, but he could not have demeaned himself in a point of honour. Yet he filled his ducal patron with his own misgivings and blamed his friends for their counsel. Ilchester had said all along that he had let things 'slip through his fingers merely upon punctilio',⁴⁸ and perhaps the less ambitious brother was right.

Yet Fox's disappointment and Pitt's laments were not the only symptoms of disaffection. The powerful pair who governed the Administration were not a little tortured by the ridicule of unfeeling bystanders.⁴⁹ It was in vain that Hardwicke sought to convince himself that the King must be displeased with Fox's refusal; he was only too ready to fear that His Majesty would frown upon Robinson, and there was no knowing the effect of Fox's 'aggravated representation'.⁵⁰ Small wonder, then, if consolation was found in a false move on the part of the enemy.

⁴⁸ Ilchester to Digby, March 23, 1754: *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII. The same day as this letter Fox himself writes in a very different tone (see note 25), and hence Ilchester may at first have let his personal views exaggerate what was simply an unreasoning discontent. But a later letter of Ilchester's (dated May 4) gives us the same story, and it is quite possible that Fox was beginning to regret his recent display of dignity.

⁴⁹ As is evident from Hardwicke's letters to Newcastle of March 18, and March 23, 1754: *Add. MSS.*, 32734, ff. 269, 307.

⁵⁰ Hardwicke to Newcastle, March 19, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 281.

Fox's friends were tired of reproaches from the man they had encouraged to preserve his self-respect, and those among them who were ministers no doubt longed for sympathetic company in a dwelling where the servants were made to feel their insignificance. As early as the 19th—before Robinson finally took the Seals—the new Chancellor of the Exchequer had sent a message intimating that Fox might yet recover his docility. But Hardwicke's stand was firm; Sir Thomas Robinson had already been put forward, and, in view of Fox's thoughtless veracity, they could not with dignity change their candidate.⁵¹ Still such a proposition had the look of surrender in it, and if the messenger had only been one of the Cumberland chieftains, the Chancellor would not have been on his guard against a feint.

But a second manœuvre a little later was corroborative even though by no means wholly reassuring. Hartington was concocting a plot in which proposals were to be laid before the King on the 20th with careful omission of Fox's name—a move described by the Chancellor as 'not only captious but insidious'.⁵² His Lordship accordingly determined to assure himself that the King would 'support his servants',⁵³ and to make matters doubly safe, it had been proposed at first that Holderness should precede Hartington in the

⁵¹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, March 19, 1754: Add. MSS., 32734, f. 281.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Quoted from his letter of March 26th.

Closet ; ⁵⁴ but in the end the Chancellor was sufficiently sanguine to omit the precaution.⁵⁵ The Cumberlands were in fact offering submission when it was too late. Whether Fox was more than a passive accomplice in the scheme does not appear,⁵⁶ but his friends were no match for the subtle lawyer, and seemed strangely unaware that the advantage was momentarily in the hands of the pair whose wounded pride had now been healed.

In April the costly farce of elections for the new Parliament took place. Not only had Opposition been paralysed ever since the Prince's death, but there was no one of the least importance among them save Egmont, and the latter would have the

⁵⁴ Hardwicke to Newcastle, March 19, 1754: Add. MSS., 32734, f. 281.

⁵⁵ Apparently the First Lord and the Chancellor were working a good deal in the dark, and Legge seems to have been their chief informant. According to that not always trustworthy messenger, Hartington believed that Fox should make submission unconditionally, and with this in view the former was to see the King again on the 30th. Again the proposal was made of having Holderness precede him in the Closet.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, March 29, 1754: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 130. Evidently the Newcastles were much in dread of the possible lengths to which the Cumberland Party would go. Hardwicke believed Fox's refusal of the Seals had been 'the result of some new consultation' (letter of March 18), and Newcastle hinted that the Duke of Devonshire was behind these latest plots (letter of March 29).

⁵⁶ Fox made it appear, according to Newcastle later, that he was simply allowing the Duke of Devonshire to amuse himself with certain schemes.

fight of his life to secure his seat for Bridgewater. The Pittites were now eligible for a share of the Ministerial bounties, and it was a pleasure for the little faction to be scrimmaging for seats in close communication with their new patron at the Treasury. Meanwhile Potter, one of the 'disreputables' who found entrée to Pitt's court, kept his important friend duly informed of all political gossip that concerned their interests. Pitt himself had secured at least one favour. The beneficent master of boroughs without number had saved him from probable disaster by the gift of a safe candidature for Aldborough in Yorkshire,⁵⁷ and the Paymaster again refrained from burdening his mind with reflection on the Pelham methods.

Fox was as usual returned for Windsor, but being out of humour, kept apparently aloof from the leading features of the drama, and the Cumberlands in general took little interest in the election. Sandwich, however, had the short-lived satisfaction of carrying two seats for St. Michael in Cornwall in spite of violent opposition. Doddington, who was bent on having Newcastle secure him a pardon from the King for his desertion to the side of the Princess, was working hard to redeem his promise to the late First Commissioner, namely the capture of six seats at his own expense.⁵⁸ Besides that task, the ex-Treasurer of the Navy had pro-

⁵⁷ A letter from Pitt to his benefactor shows us his usual obsequience at this time: *Chatham Corres.* I. 85.

⁵⁸ Doddington, *Diary*, November 7, 1753.

mised to make a determined effort to secure Egmont's defeat; ⁵⁹ and all these engagements were remembered by the new First Lord. In his brisk notes the amiable intriguer records three days 'spent in the infamous and disagreeable compliance with the low habits of venal wretches'; ⁶⁰ but they were not without recompense; the six seats were secured and Egmont was saved only—so it was said ⁶¹—by illegal votes which the mayor acknowledged as such but did not exclude.

The elections in the main revealed much the same tactics as were generally employed while Newcastle was the voter's friend. If indeed there were few counter-influences, there was always a vast horde who cared little for parliaments or premiers, but knew the value of their own political prerogatives. Whether they were more avaricious than usual, or Newcastle was particularly punctilious in beginning his primacy with a splendid appearance, we are told that never was bribery so profuse as on this occasion. ⁶² Although much had been settled before Pelham's death, there were many who had still to be persuaded with guineas that their services were still desirable under the new commander.

The new Parliament met for a few days in May.

⁵⁹ Doddington, *Diary*, October 9, 1753.

⁶⁰ Ibid., April 14, 15, 16, 1754. Doddington told Newcastle that his expenses, when figured up, would amount to £2,500—*Ibid.*, April 26, 1754.

⁶¹ Ibid., April 17, 1754.

⁶² Walpole to Mann, March 7, 1754, *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 216.

Pitt, being pressed by Newcastle for his opinion of it, replied, 'Your Grace will be surprised, but I think Mr. Fox should have been (put) at the head of the Commons.'⁶³ This was magnanimous on the part of the ambitious Paymaster, for only a short time previously Fox on his side had expressed his willingness 'to serve with and under Mr. Pitt'.⁶⁴ Newcastle might remember and connect the two cases, as well as Pitt's own letter of April 5, but at present he was still absorbed in the pleasures of electioneering.

In the end there was nothing to sully the completeness of the victory. A larger number of Whigs were to compose the new Parliament than ever had been since the Revolution,⁶⁵ and the unimpeachable First Minister had some cause to exult. The King was not tardy in expressing his satisfaction;⁶⁶ and Pitt's own election committed him—ostensibly at least—to the Newcastle system.⁶⁷

⁶³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 340.

⁶⁴ Lyttelton to Hardwicke, March 23, 1754, Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, III. 3. It is not unlikely that each of these malcontents had—even as early as this—the idea of an alliance in mind.

⁶⁵ Torrens, II. 189. Only 42 seats had even been contested.—Tindal, *Translation and Continuation of Rapin's History of Eng.*, XXI. 510.

⁶⁶ Hardwicke to Newcastle, April 23, 1754: Add. MSS., 32735, f. 178.

⁶⁷ Pitt wrote on the 20th (*ibid.*, f. 139) and again on the 22nd (*ibid.*, f. 142), acknowledging his obligations to Newcastle. In the former letter he writes, 'I consider my political life as some way or other drawing to a conclusion, or rather as arrived at its period.'

But the elated First Minister was not permitted to rest long after his exertions, or to delude himself with the notion that a stupendous parliamentary majority meant a similar equanimity in the Ministry. From the time of the election in April till the opening of Parliament in November, the jealousy of Legge, the half-revengeful ambition of Fox, and the Minister's own inexperience in the ways of the House of Commons, formed a confused labyrinth of intrigue such as compromising Pelham had never known, and his power-loving brother was always more or less to endure until he should consent to relegate a secondary intelligence to a secondary position.

The months of May and June wore an illusory calm. It was about the middle of July that the harbinger of discord alighted, and from the direction of the Minister's own Treasury Board. Henry Legge, besides being a practical man of business, was an habitual dabbler in the intricacies of party politics. Clever enough to see Newcastle's failings, and thoroughly discontented with his own position in the governing circle, Legge was quick to perceive the advantage of coalescing with the malcontents of the hour as a means both of compelling respect for his own opinions and of paving the way to greater power.

It was during the lethargy of summer, when ministers bore their official burdens as lightly as possible, and the truce among parties was unbroken save by occasional growls from Hayes or Holland

House, that the crafty conspirator of the Treasury waited on His Grace for the purpose of feeling the ground. This was on July 18, and Newcastle wrote the same day telling of the interview. Legge talked in a cursory fashion of the House of Commons, and mention of prominent members finally led him to converge upon Pitt and Fox. For the former he felt that the Whigs had no cause to feel so much displeasure; in regard to the latter his comments were by no means new intelligence to the Duke, who gathered that Fox had made some professions, but exactly of what sort did not appear. What Legge gained from the colloquy is not recorded, but he probably got the Newcastle measure of the two giants, and was content with merely clearing up some doubts in his mind.

But before the Duke's letter was sealed or sent a postscript was added that resembled a hurricane after the gentlest of breezes. Rumour had it that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had pointed out the incongruity of a 'Tory head to a Whig body'; and so dreadful a calumny as this the Chancellor must sift to the bottom. The affront as applied to Murray, his most trusted lieutenant in the Lower House, seemed to evoke no emotion, but to himself the First Lord felt it an unpardonable outrage. In a paroxysm of grief or rage the Duke threatened to join Fox rather than have any further regard for his subordinate at the Treasury.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 18, 1754: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 143.

The motives for this act of treachery are probably to be found in Legge's aforesaid dissatisfaction with his position, and an innate love of mischief, all the more dangerous by reason of his skill and perspicacity. Legge had once been a bane to Sir Robert Walpole; the King had no patience with him; and at Woburn he was cordially detested.

While Newcastle was threatening to lay bare the infamy of Legge, the Secretary-at-War was growing more and more weary of a secondary position among colleagues of inferior capacity. His nascent misgivings have already been noticed, but from now onwards they took a more definite form, and that form was latent conspiracy. In August he nearly created a scandal in the Foreign Office. Holderness had apparently neglected to inform him of some army order sent to the West Indies, intelligence which as Secretary-at-War he had a right to expect; and not disposed to argue with a cipher that was so by ministerial design, he carried his complaint to the King. The action—as even Newcastle admitted—was crowned with ‘some success’.

A few days after this episode, both the underlying motives of Fox and the partiality of the Duke of Devonshire, long suspected, were at length unmasked. Stone had it from Fox that the Chancellor had sounded the Duke regarding the state of mind of the War Office, and had been met with the suggestion that a seat in the Cabinet would

be a useful concession. This, Devonshire protested, was mentioned without the knowledge of Fox,⁶⁹ and it was indeed probable that he was giving only a definite colour to the other's machinations.

Meanwhile the King was puzzling all sides. On the one hand he praised Robinson to Newcastle as superlatively able and punctual, and flattered the Duke with the additional remark that the new Secretary was the best that he had ever had save Newcastle himself ;⁷⁰ while on the other hand he gave significant tokens of an interest in Fox and his coquetry with the Court. Lady Yarmouth went even further, and not only received numerous visits from the Secretary-at-War, but took him about in her post-chaise as well. Fox naturally recounted his ill-treatment of March, and the story got back to Newcastle through a confidential friend.⁷¹ The much-dreaded plotter said also that he had not seen Devonshire, which meant no doubt that he was still disinclined to make a personal demand ; yet he allowed himself

⁶⁹ Minute taken by Stone, August 30, 1754: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 173.

⁷⁰ 'I can hardly write it without blushing,' was Newcastle's comment.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 1, 1754 (first letter of that date): Add. MSS., 32736, f. 388.

⁷¹ Baron Munckhausen, the Hanoverian Ambassador. He was long one of Newcastle's political agents, especially in dealing with Leicester House, where the Baron was popular. In one of his letters Newcastle writes of him as 'the best friend we have'.

to say that if Newcastle were not satisfied with their present relations, he might surely have 'taken a handle' from the suggestion of Devonshire.⁷²

The much-harassed First Minister was ready at this stage to believe anything or suspect any one. This fighting with phantoms in the dark was something to which he was wholly unused. At one moment his jealousy found a victim in the Chancellor ;⁷³ this, being a trifle, was speedily ended by the King's salve to his vanity—an episode we have just noted ; but the Fox-Devonshire conspiracy was estimated at quite all its face-value, and possibly at more. The manœuvres of Fox the Duke regarded as 'outward reconciliation' only. 'They know as well as we do,' he told his sympathetic adviser, 'the dissatisfaction of Mr. Pitt, the open opposition of My Lord Temple, and the pragmatistical discontent of Mr. Legge. They then consider who there is of weight in the House of Commons, upon whom we can depend ; they can easily see that there is no one but the Attorney-General ; and from thence they conclude (and with reason) that if they can blacken him with the Whigs, we shall neither be able to employ him with success nor he be willing to be employed, and

⁷² Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 1, 1754 (second letter of that date): Add. MSS., 32736, f. 392.

⁷³ The point in question was the responsibility for the choice of Robinson, whom the King liked.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 1, 1754: *ibid.* f. 388.

in this they are right . . . ; this is the first scheme of the year.' This, Newcastle decided, had been the origin of the violent Whiggism of Legge;⁷⁴ so, when the First Lord should become cold to his Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the latter should complain of want of confidence, Fox, the 'hero of the Whigs', would, by defending the Attorney-General, worm his way into favour.⁷⁵

This conception of the intrigue, though probably extended to undue dimensions in the last particular, shows how uneasy lay the head that ruled the Ministry. Pelham would have courted, parleyed, yielded; but, though equally timid in most instances, Newcastle preferred to engross his power and shudder, rather than lull discontents by seeming to share it. Meanwhile the Cumberlands had become active again, and with what result was yet to be seen.

Newcastle was no doubt right in believing that the campaign against Murray was instigated by the fact that he was the only man of considerable debating power who was loyal to the Administration and not fishing in troubled waters. But whether these attacks were from any one but Legge, and whether Fox and Legge were in collusion at

⁷⁴ 'They (the Cumberlands) are now (wrote the Duke) to make this little Legge declare himself a Whig, that he owed his situation to the Whigs, and that he was so good as to declare to everybody that I was a Whig.'—Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 1, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 388. All this seems very trivial, but the Duke was evidently overwrought.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

all—beyond a common desire to force the Duke's hand—must depend on our rejection or acceptance of Newcastle's belief. The Duke even felt that if Murray could not be whitewashed he would have to make room for Fox as the only way of muzzling his promoters.⁷⁶

Hardwicke's reply, in its main theme, was regret that he had had any part in the affair with Devonshire. Fox, he wrote, had omitted most of what was said; and for his own part, he would make no further move in the affair. He added, however, with a show of resignation, 'If any other person shall be inclined to bring him in, I can (only) acquiesce in it, as all personalities between that gentleman and me are now quite over as if they had never been.'⁷⁷ The plot against Murray was not touched upon, unless a second letter was written and destroyed. The lawyer's instinct sometimes required his letters to be burned.

Meanwhile, coincident with these efforts to satisfy aspirations, and stir up troubles for an unpopular First Minister, was the more commendable and no less important desire of many to ensure success to the King's measures in the House of Commons. When the Sovereign concurred in Robinson's nomination, he had made it clear that the responsibility for its success must lie solely

⁷⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 1, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 388.

⁷⁷ Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 3, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 413.

with the Ministers ;⁷⁸ and the conviction was strong in the mind of the First Lord that his chance of peaceful supremacy, as well as his only means of outdoing his adversaries, was a quiet and well-ordered session. Robinson, having lived the life of a diplomat, and but little experienced in domestic policy or parliamentary methods, was naturally reluctant to undertake the management ;⁷⁹ Murray's support of measures could always be counted on, but his judicial position would exclude him from the rôle of a subordinate jobber ; and Pitt had already announced his intended silence,⁸⁰ since the door to success was still closed. Newcastle thought much of measures, and had consulted his friend, Barnard, on finance,⁸¹ but for men to support them he was, in the last weeks of September, still utterly at sea.

The Princess had been one of the first to feel concern, and showed magnanimous self-sacrifice by offering to submit to Fox, although he was the last man she would have liked.⁸² Such an idea was of course snatching at Devonshire's voluntary suggestion. About a fortnight's thinking made Her Royal Highness wish she had held her tongue, and she now looked with dread upon the prospect of

⁷⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, March 26, 1754 : Add. MSS., 32734, f. 359.

⁷⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 22, 1754 : Add. MSS., 32736, f. 554.

⁸⁰ Page 169.

⁸¹ Second letter of September 1.

⁸² First letter of September 1.

a Fox-Newcastle reconciliation.⁸³ Lady Yarmouth was, however, more consistent in her opinion: a leader was essential in the House of Commons; and the choice must be Fox or he would make it impossible for any one else; furthermore, he must be a minister. Such was evidently the Court's doctrine, and, in view of events in August, Hardwicke had felt that her behaviour was worth regarding.

At last the little Chancellor of the Exchequer had flung his bomb into the troubled camp. The idea from which all these hints proceeded was no less than a proposed innovation—of no little constitutional importance—whereby the recognized Leader of the House of Commons, without the need of any titled office in the Ministry, should have unquestioned access to the royal Closet for all business of the Lower House. Such a scheme would practically have meant that unless the First Lord were himself a member of the Lower House, some other politician, much more closely in touch with the Commons, could thereby form an alliance with the King against his Cabinet. No wonder Newcastle stood aghast when its author expounded his opinion;⁸⁴ and even the imperturbable Chancellor, when apprised of it, was scarcely less concerned at this dream of a 'single leadership',

⁸³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 21, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 554.

⁸⁴ The interview in which Legge took it upon himself to advise Newcastle is described by the latter in his letter to Murray, September 28, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 591.

reposing beyond a doubt in the person of Fox. 'When that is established,' he declared, 'in the degree they mean it, there will in my apprehension be an end of Your Grace's chief power as the Minister of this country.'⁸⁵ Obviously the tower of 'absolutism' was shaking.

Meanwhile the King, when he did not rail against Pitt, talked much of Fox.⁸⁶ He felt certain that the latter would not 'carry his ill-humour into opposition', and it was plain that his partiality was for the Secretary-at-War. All the satisfaction he received from the First Lord was the assurance that Hartington should inform his friend of the 'plan' for the coming session,⁸⁷ and the Duke himself would 'talk strongly to Mr. Legge'.⁸⁸ Lady Yarmouth assured Newcastle that Fox 'would be content with little', but the Duke feared that 'that meant a great deal . . . and may end in the whole or an attempt for it'. In other

⁸⁵ The Chancellor cautioned his friend against talking too much of Legge's idea, lest it 'propagate the doctrine'.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 27, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 583.

⁸⁶ On one occasion he threatened to give Pitt's office to Fox. But there is no evidence to show that Fox would have welcomed this transference.

⁸⁷ The Duke decided not to employ Stone for this purpose because 'it would have more connexion with the late transaction (see p. 181), and that, I think, we should steer clear of'. Newcastle was evidently much afraid of Devonshire's suggestion and what it might lead to.

⁸⁸ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 21, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 554.

words, if the very least that could be expected was that there must be a Minister in the House of Commons, responsible for the management thereof, the powerful man at the War Office seemed more and more inevitable; his stock in Lady Yarmouth's keeping was yielding greater interest than ever, and the Duchess of Dorset was not only paying homage to Fox but also making herself the channel of some advances from the Duke of Bedford, who, tired of fruitless opposition, was knocking gently for admission.⁸⁹ It must have seemed, indeed, as if the whole group we have designated as the 'Cumberland party' was plotting to secure a place or to wrest a portion of the First Lord's power. The failures of Dorset in Ireland were in fine accord with the Duke of Marlborough's ambition to succeed him;⁹⁰ and Marlborough's interest in Fox's designs on the Cabinet,⁹¹ as well as Legge's endeavours to get Sandwich a pension, are both indications of the understanding which seemed to obtain between members of this faction.⁹²

⁸⁹ Newcastle expressed his intention of encouraging these 'overtures'.—Newcastle to Murray, September 28, 1754; Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 27, 1754.

⁹⁰ No doubt Marlborough's 'passion for Ireland' was at the bottom of the Duchess of Dorset's interest in Fox and Bedford. She thought, by conciliating the Cumberlands, to save her husband. This view is expressed by Hardwicke in his letter of September 27.

⁹¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 362.

⁹² Legge seems to have been the active agent of all the prominent members; for he also urged Newcastle to 'satisfy' the Duke of Cumberland, whatever that meant.—Newcastle

We can hardly blame Newcastle for planning to promote good feeling by a grand 'parliamentary dinner'—but should he ask Fox?⁹³ Hardwicke replied that he deemed it 'very proper', since Fox was to be acquainted with the 'plan' for the coming session.⁹⁴

Newcastle was by this time fully convinced that Pitt, Fox and Legge had tacitly or otherwise agreed that there must be a minister of authority in the House of Commons; at last, the Duke declared, the secret of their conduct was out, and the man in whom their confidence centred was only too obvious. All roads led without deviation to Fox. Legge indeed might make him less palatable, but Pitt (whose complicity in the intrigue seems to have been considerably exaggerated) was expected sooner or later to force Fox upon them. The crisis was acute, but Newcastle was still several paces in advance of putting his sovereignty in jeopardy; that was to come. 'Who', he asked the Attorney-General, 'can share the Ministry with Mr. Fox, or any one who . . . is Minister in the Closet for the House of Commons?'⁹⁵ That was where the boot pinched. Newcastle was no more willing to give a leader of the Commons the proper and efficient

to Murray, September 28, 1754. Doubtless Legge was courting the Cumberlands in order to further his own prospects.

⁹³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 2, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 24.

⁹⁴ Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 3, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 27.

⁹⁵ Newcastle to Murray, September 28, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 591.

power than he was when he broke his word to Fox on the 13th of March.

The Duke's own recipe for success in the House of Commons convicted him of his inexperience. In his partnership with Pelham his contribution to their supremacy had been threefold: he gave England obtrusive prominence abroad; he made the Cabinet bend to his will; and he gave the constituencies their preliminary lesson in unswerving loyalty to the Pelham interests. But the actual breaking, training and driving of opinionless members in the school of infallible majorities was the duty of the brother at the Treasury. The Duke of Newcastle had little more insight into the political workings of the House of Commons than the most roystering idler of White's or Newmarket. Hence it was that he had dared to entrust his peace of mind and his coveted absolutism to the hands of a Vienna diplomat.

But now, when at last it had been forced upon him that his greed of power had carried him beyond the bounds of practicability, the Duke lent his thoughts to concocting a new plan—actually as little effective as the previous one, and so aerial as to be almost ridiculous. Since it had to be realized that the late Master of the Wardrobe had a natural distaste for the diet prescribed, the First Minister's recipe was a division of the duties: Robinson should give the House the necessary instructions; the Chancellor of the Exchequer would talk upon the revenue; and the Secretary-

at-War and Paymaster would in some vague way be expected to provide the necessary oratory ; more than all, there was the Attorney-General to rely upon for making a panacea out of nothing ; and finally in the ' second rank ' (to use the Duke's term) were men like Nugent, Dupplin, Hillsborough and Charles Yorke, most excellent clay for modelling automata. Such, in brief, was the ' system ' Newcastle mapped out for the session of 1754-5.⁹⁶ Legge gave a half-hearted consent to play his part in the medley,⁹⁷ and the concurrence of the rest was taken for granted. As yet the pantomime was still to be acted.

While Fox and others were weaving a web of intrigue about the man they detested, the Achilles of the Pay Office stood apart, nursing his wrath in sullen exclusion. There is no evidence to prove that he had helped in fomenting dissension, but the very isolation of the man at Hayes and Stowe seemed to breed suspicion in the minds of the men who had cajoled but not advanced him. Community of interests, however, was drawing him closer to the King's son and his party. In August the Duke had enlisted Fox to write to Pitt with respect to the deplorable situation of invalid soldiers,⁹⁸ who, being unpaid during illness and

⁹⁶ Newcastle to Murray, September 28, 1754 ; Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 21, 1754.

⁹⁷ Newcastle to Murray, September 28, 1754.

⁹⁸ Fox to Pitt, August 20, 1754: *Chatham Corres.* I. 110. These soldiers were inmates of Chelsea Hospital, which Charles II had built at the instigation of Sir Stephen Fox.

convalescence, were driven by debt into the clutches of usurers. Pitt readily consented to contrive some measure of relief,⁹⁹ and the matter was also reported to Newcastle.¹⁰⁰ The final solution was a pension for half a year during convalescence, and the commendable reform eventually passed Parliament on its second reading. The initial credit of the undertaking belonged properly to Cumberland, rather than to Pitt, who as Paymaster would naturally have the matter in charge; but the affair has the stamp of the cordial alliance that was being cemented between Pittites and Cumberlands.

In the autumn the exigencies of colonial affairs were to tighten the bond. The French pioneers, who had found such a lucrative traffic in the fur trade of the American West, had pushed their converging ways up the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi until the English colonies in the East were practically hemmed in. Inevitably the right of possession must in large measure depend upon settlement, but the French were only settlers in so far as scattered trading-posts gave colour to their claim; while the English colonists, more concerned with commerce than with traditions of discovery, and better situated geographically for expansion, were gradually intruding upon the zone which France regarded as her inalienable share. The broad question of rights is one we hardly need discuss. Where money

⁹⁹ Pitt to Fox, August 20, 1754: *Chatham Corres.* I. 111.

¹⁰⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 2, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 24.

is the object, rights may easily be coined ; and how natural that the colonists, with their consciousness of boundless area, should speedily take advantage of the absence of fixed frontiers ! Thus far Acadia and the Alleghanies were the principal points of contact, and in vain a commission of delimitation sat at Paris to discuss them. Peace through mutual concessions was a solution in no wise hopeless, but for commissioners of the two countries to seek a common interpretation of treaties purposely vague was becoming an anachronism. And so the disputes multiplied through apathy ; and the result was a great deal of barrier warfare, known but little heeded by the mother-countries across the ocean. Indeed it was only when friction was intensified by a struggle for the head-waters of the Ohio that the dangers which had lurked beneath emerged rudely into prominence. The crisis was reached in July 1754, when Major George Washington capitulated to the French ; the tidings reached England during the first week of September.

The English Ministers were divided in their opinions and distracted by the delicate problem of an ostensible war in time of peace. Granville had felt all along that the colonies themselves were potentially strong enough ;¹⁰¹ and his own idea (though long disregarded) was to make intelligent use of the material in America. But when the news of Washington's defeat came to burden the

¹⁰¹ Newcastle disagreed with this view.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 4, 1754 : Add. MSS., 32736, f. 424.

minds of anxious politicians, the blame had certainly to be put somewhere, and Newcastle and Hardwicke agreed that it was 'monstrous' that the colonists could not or would not help themselves.¹⁰² It was the inevitable day of reckoning after years of calculated indifference. Only once had a partial effort been made to follow Granville's policy;¹⁰³ and now, when reminded of his failure, the Duke thought only of the effect it might have upon home politics. What if his numerous enemies should seek political capital in this news? And yet, with Parliament an uncertain factor, he trembled at the thought of expenditure; and Hardwicke, always ready to dodge an unpleasant problem, was thoroughly in accord.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Newcastle to Granville, September 5, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 432; Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 7, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 436.

¹⁰³ The resolution was taken at a Cabinet meeting on June 14th that some project of union between the colonies should be prepared. In August some such plan was drafted by the Board of Trade, but Hardwicke had no confidence in the policy (*ibid.*), and the long delays which had ensued were eventually to kill it. When at last the plan was submitted to Robinson in the first week of September, the time had come for more vigorous measures. We should add, moreover, that Governor Shirley's efforts to resist French encroachments on the Kenebec had been seemingly the motive for holding the above meeting.—Palfrey, *History of New England*, V. 128; Minute, Newcastle House, June 14, 1754: Add. MSS., 32995, f. 266. The Board of Trade's 'plan' may be found in *Documents relative to the Colonial History of New York* (ed. O'Callaghan), VI. 903–6.

¹⁰⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 21, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 554; Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 27, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 583.

But the Cumberlands and Murray were outspoken in their desire for vigorous action. The Attorney-General felt that the greatest need was for officers, and the fact that there were more than enough in Ireland would make it practicable to dispatch a number to America. He even suggested that a commander should be sent,¹⁰⁵ and some one else proposed that a civilian of weight should go too. This, of course, affected Newcastle, who had a lively vision of Halifax filling a rôle with which he would not be able to meddle; and was consequently much relieved when His Majesty rejected the idea.¹⁰⁶

Almost a month having been spent in saying what ought to be done without doing it, it was at last decided—despite the Chancellor's resistance¹⁰⁷—that the ruling spirits of the Cabinet should confer with Cumberland on the 26th for the purpose of considering what action should be taken.¹⁰⁸ We can imagine how easily Cumberland dominated the situation, and it was resolved 'after much debate (so Newcastle tells us) to send *forthwith*

¹⁰⁵ Murray to Newcastle, September 7, 1754: Add. MSS., 32736, f. 438.

¹⁰⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 21, 1754.

¹⁰⁷ While consenting (albeit reluctantly) to attend the conference suggested, Hardwicke felt that no action whatever could be taken until 'authentic accounts' should be received of 'the defeat and its consequences'. His letter (September 22) is full of objections, and its whole tone spells delay.—Add. MSS., 32736, f. 554.

¹⁰⁸ No evidence of any meeting of the full Cabinet on the question has come down to us.

two Irish regiments to Virginia'. In vain Granville urged his opinion that the colonies should raise the needed army.¹⁰⁹ His Royal Highness had confidence only in regular troops,¹¹⁰ and it was his policy which triumphed.

Newcastle's programme, in a nutshell, was to do as little as might be consistent with his desire to avoid 'the reproach of doing nothing'.¹¹¹ Against so personal a view of the situation the men with more patriotism and less political stake were speedily arrayed; and Pitt showed his sympathy with the active spirits in the Cabinet by insisting that Granville's idea was no less important than Cumberland's, and now at this moment was the time for a decisive blow.¹¹² Very probably the Duke regretted that he had aroused this dangerous adviser; but now that he was plainly on the losing side, there was nothing to do—from the Pelham standpoint—but claim the credit of such suggestions before it was too late. So the decision was taken to raise two regiments in the Colonies, and send them all the necessary equipment for a second

¹⁰⁹ Newcastle expressed his opinion that a strong American army, such as Granville wanted, would have meant a 'general war'.—Newcastle to Murray, September 28, 1754. Perhaps in this view may be found the reason for the apathy regarding a general concert of the colonies.

¹¹⁰ See Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 390.

¹¹¹ Quoted from his letter of October 12 to Hardwicke.

¹¹² Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 2, 1754. The occasion of this advice was Pitt's visit on the 1st for the purpose of discussing outpensioners. See p. 93.

expedition against the French. Hardwicke expressed the hope that Pitt would lend his support to the plan in Parliament,¹¹³ and evidently distrusted a politician so erratic; but the only course now left to the two chiefs was to put off the second measure and minimize expenses.¹¹⁴

Whether Fox had any precise views on colonial policy it is difficult to say. But undoubtedly he was fully aware of the Duke of Cumberland's desire for vigorous action, and thoroughly despised the pusillanimity of the Cabinet. His friend Bedford had suffered the mortification of seeing an unresisted project lie in the office of a colleague until it faded into oblivion; and, profiting by this instance, Fox determined that no office under his direction should be sunk into inertia by a jealous First Minister. He was at a disadvantage in not being a member of the Cabinet, with a voice and a vote that might enforce his patron's wishes, and he was not even always asked to attend that he might know all the opinions that were offered; yet after all something might be made of that very

¹¹³ Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 3, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 27.

¹¹⁴ This was confessedly Newcastle's intention (Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 2). Before his interview with Pitt, and apparently after Granville's policy had been seriously considered, he requested Robinson to defer writing to the two commanders selected for the regiments; and though now obliged to give way on this point, he was determined that the second expedition should wait until winter or the following spring.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 2 and 12, 1754.

ignorance of plans and purposes, and Fox determined that the two expeditions should be fitted out simultaneously, instead of allowing one to be postponed, as Newcastle intended.¹¹⁵ Pursuant to this design, he framed a letter to the Duke, October 6, and stated (rather peremptorily) the plans and requirements of the War Office.¹¹⁶ The same day—as though anxious not to terrify his parsimonious chief—he assured Secretary West of the Treasury that ‘everything in his office had been considered in the most economical manner’.¹¹⁷ But the quiver of the Secretary-at-War was not yet empty. On the following day he demanded and received the royal signature for the warrants to raise the colonial regiments, as well as for the list of officers selected to command them.¹¹⁸ Evidently the War Office was taking the law into its own hands.

It is unfortunate that we are unable to determine exactly the part which Cumberland was playing in this systematic coercion of the Ministers. That he conferred with Fox¹¹⁹ and expressed ideas to

¹¹⁵ There is some reason for suspecting that Fox’s attitude was responsible for the instructions to Robinson which we have noted. In the same paragraph Newcastle had previously written, ‘I send Your Lordship Sir Thos. Robinson’s letter, with an account of what has passed with Mr. Fox.’ Doubtless any move in the direction of an energetic policy would immediately serve to put the Duke on his guard.

¹¹⁶ Fox to Newcastle, October 6, 1754: Add.MSS., 32737, f. 51.

¹¹⁷ West to Newcastle, October 7, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 73.

¹¹⁸ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1754: *ibid.*, 107.

¹¹⁹ Anson alludes to one conference between the two in his letter to Newcastle on the 12th: *ibid.*, f. 129.

which the latter gave effective shape is eminently likely ; and we know that he had supreme direction of all military arrangements—which thus included the selection of his friend Braddock to command. Meanwhile the other departments of the Administration would be easily led (whether correctly or not) to suspect the presence of his hand, and it was just on this awe of so important a personage that Fox knew so well how to trade. The predicament of the Newcastles can readily be judged. Secretary Robinson, who was used to moving slowly and following Newcastle's lead in politics, was not a little disturbed by all this haste, and he took the step of warning the First Lord both that the warrants had been signed and that the Board of Ordnance was to advertise for ships on the morrow.¹²⁰

Generally it may be said that it required considerable provocation to evoke from Newcastle more than a plaintive letter to the Chancellor or a crafty insinuation to the King ; but in the present case the Secretary-at-War was evidently determined to go as far as the Cabinet would let him, and haste in one measure led naturally to haste in another. Deeming it useless to detain Deputy-Commissary Pitcher for the sake of a quartermaster whom Anson was trying to find in Flanders and hardly expected before a fortnight,¹²¹ Fox

¹²⁰ Robinson to Newcastle, October 7, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 61.

¹²¹ Robinson to Newcastle, October 11, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 105. Fox intended that Pitcher should depart on the 15th, and

announced in the *Gazette* (October 8) that all officers appointed to command the regiments in America should 'repair forthwith to their posts'.¹²² But one tactical mistake gave a handle to his enemies. Fox neglected in his haste to assure them that the Commissary was well provided.¹²³

It was, in fact, the case of Pitcher which seemed to pass the Cabinet's limit of endurance ; for even Anson, convert as he was to Granville's policy,¹²⁴ was thrown into dismay at Fox's seeming indifference to consequences.¹²⁵ To Newcastle, on the contrary, the question was only political. At last the time had come for the sensitive autocrat of the Treasury to make his power felt ; and he forthwith prevailed upon the King to suspend all orders which had been given in his name until a meeting with Fox could be held and an explanation demanded. Incidentally we can gather the latter's force of determination from the fact that His Majesty

doubtless hoped that he could force the appointment of another quartermaster.

¹²² *London Gazette*, no. 9,413.

¹²³ Anson to Newcastle, October 12, 1754. It is not so much a certainty that Fox was neglecting to provide the troops with rations as that his general hurry—and especially the order in the *Gazette*—had given that impression. Whether or not Fox was simply deferring the matter, Anson quickly took the case into his own hands.

¹²⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 2, 1754.

¹²⁵ Anson may also have been annoyed at some orders to the Admiralty, which created general confusion. 'Thus Your Grace sees,' wrote Robinson to Newcastle (October 12), 'that no great stop is put to their speed.'—Add. MSS., 32737, f. 135.

confessed his astonishment at the haste of the War Office, but ‘ Mr. Fox told me it was to be so and what could I do ? ’ ¹²⁶ But Newcastle, too, was capable of hurrying when political motives impelled him, and the very next day the inner circle of the Cabinet held a meeting, at which Fox was summoned to be present. Yet, whilst ‘ everything ’ was described as ‘ extremely civil ’, Newcastle could extract the mention of only one order that Fox had given—and this the docile King straightway set aside, as having been sent without his knowledge. At the same meeting—probably at Fox’s instance—the question of augmenting the Irish regiments was debated, but finally negatived. ¹²⁷ And yet still the Secretary-at-War seemed incorrigible: now he worried the First Lord and his chief adviser by holding long conferences with Pitt; ¹²⁸ now he hired transports without awaiting the sanction of the Treasury Board. ¹²⁹ Even after Pitcher’s departure had been authoritatively postponed Fox endeavoured (though unsuccessfully) to override the order; ¹³⁰ and in the meantime—

¹²⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1754.

¹²⁷ Ibid.; Minute of meeting, Newcastle House, October 9, 1754.

¹²⁸ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1754. ‘ I suppose in time,’ Hardwicke remarked drily, ‘ fire and water may agree.’ —Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 13, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 147.

¹²⁹ Fox to West, October 11, 1754: *ibid.* 133. Fox declared ‘ the time would not admit of it ’.

¹³⁰ Robinson to Newcastle, October 26, 1754: *ibid.* 201. The Chancellor declared peevishly that Fox’s game was to give

in order first to confer with Cumberland—he had a meeting of the Cabinet postponed until the 16th. Perhaps the only comfort of the conservative element in the Ministry was the fact that the quartermaster's return was 'precarious' and Fox apparently 'stopped in his speed'.

The difference on colonial policy, while never descending to the level of an actual quarrel, was the Duke of Newcastle's first serious encounter with the Cumberland Party, and to the man who had triumphed over Bedford the affair must have been as humiliating as it was ominous for the future. Hardwicke agreed with the Duke that the advertisement in the *Gazette* was contrary to the secrecy intended by the Cabinet, and also had something to say of what 'some persons' would do with their power if they had it.¹³¹ It was only too clear that a vital matter of policy had been wrested from their hands. On the 16th—as we may suppose—the Cabinet held its intended meeting, and doubtless all points that were under dispute were finally settled. Though we lack specific information, it appears from a letter of Newcastle's shortly afterwards¹³² that the combined policy of Cumberland and Granville was accepted

the colonies the impression that the Government was still unprepared, and thereby to discredit the Ministry. But Fox hardly merited this censure, for he would certainly have been very glad to see Braddock embark almost as soon as Pitcher.

¹³¹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 13, 1754.

¹³² Newcastle to Walpole, October 26, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 207.

in its entirety, and all differences between the Duke and Fox over expenses were decided against the former. Nothing had been left to the Duke but to write a soothing letter to Paris, and the episode—which is chiefly important as marking an official and decisive recognition of the problem of colonial defence—may perhaps be regarded as closed.

Fox in the recent proceedings was apparently serving two ends. Whatever may have been his honest belief respecting his country's colonial interests, his chief aim seems to have been the furtherance of his patron's martial policy, which, revealing to us thus early the germ of the War Party, had gained its first triumph over the Ministry. The other motive-force which actuated the Secretary-at-War was no doubt secondary, but was, in fact, himself. If mutual discontent in the spring and summer of 1754 had paved the way for a Fox-Pitt alliance, the perfect agreement of the two in a strenuous military policy was quite sufficient to consummate it. It was during this very controversy on military matters that the First Minister, in a patronizing endeavour to flatter his subaltern of the Pay Office, was met with a stinging rebuff; ¹³³ and, according to Fox's friend, Hills-

¹³³ According to Doddington, when the First Lord wished to consult Pitt on some question relative to the colonies, the latter broke in with, 'Your Grace, I suppose, knows that I have no capacity for these things and therefore I do not desire to be informed about them.'—Doddington, *Diary*, October 8, 1754. This may have been the inauspicious beginning of the interview, already mentioned, note 112.

borough, the two men of the Commons had united in a positive compact to usurp and dissect the ministerial hegemony: the Paymaster to secure the Seals, and the Secretary-at-War the greater office at the Treasury. It is doubtful, however, if the union went as far as this. Such a combination wore a look of reality which the respective dispositions of the allies would never permit in practice. It came nearer to the nature of an armed truce than of an *entente cordiale*.

The last week of October and the first week of November were mainly expended, so far as the First Minister was concerned, in further preparations for the parliamentary initiation of his Administration. Some difficulty was encountered in getting recruits for moving and seconding the address, but this was obviated in course of time, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was flattered with the prospect of writing the usual circular letter.¹³⁴ Yet the dawn of peace was still far distant. Rebellion was no less rampant in the camp, and 'that creature of ours', Legge, who, Newcastle had declared, should be treated with 'authority and contempt',¹³⁵ was still disturbing the repose of the man who had raised him to political prominence.

While the press of colonial business was such as to make interruptions annoying, the Chancellor

¹³⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 21, 1754: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 203.

¹³⁵ First letter of September 1.

of the Exchequer opened his heart to Sir Thomas Robinson on his real or imagined grievances. If he should be expected to reply to Fox in debate, it was simply beyond his capabilities; Fox was 'able and terrible'. He could only promise to do his best, but his advice was decidedly to make Pitt Secretary of State and bring Fox into the Treasury (probably his own post being meant). The readiness with which Newcastle fell into the trap of the mischief-maker is only one instance of the weak side of the Duke as a politician, or, in other words, the weakness of a deliberate absolutist who could not magnetize, and would not conciliate. Instead of treating Legge with 'authority and contempt', or instead, perhaps, of treating him as a friend to be trusted and confided in, the First Minister worried himself as well as others in striving to 'probe the wound' (as he expressed it ¹³⁶) for the diagnosis of a case that was chronic. Legge no doubt considered the proposed system for Parliament ridiculous, but a suspicion that he found delight in plaguing the Minister who thought him ungrateful is irresistible.

Fox, in the mind and fears of the First Lord, was becoming more and more inevitable.¹³⁷ The Duke gave the sumptuous dinner which he had intended for the prominent members of the House of Commons, and deliberately omitted the Secretary-at-War—an act which the cautious Chancellor

¹³⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 21, 1754.

¹³⁷ Ibid., October 24, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 191.

thought a grave mistake.¹³⁸ Simultaneously the papers were full of Fox's name as the prospective Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Newcastle regarded this as another bit of Legge's devilry. More efforts were talked of for suppressing the crafty intriguer—his behaviour should be laid before the King, and the threat should be administered of taking his hint seriously.¹³⁹

A few days later Newcastle himself saw Legge, and listened to him with the interest that only a man was able to feel whose own capacity for intrigue was inexhaustible; it was Greek and Greek. Legge professed this time to have had an interview with Pitt, who, according to the former, would no longer advance a claim to the Seals, if the King would 'take notice of him' and 'treat him with confidence';¹⁴⁰ but 'Fox', declared the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 'must be Secretary of State,' and this could be done by removing and indemnifying Lord Holderness.

Newcastle was puzzled at the Paymaster's new turn—which is probably true as represented—and remarked that when formerly he had 'flung out' this idea himself, Pitt had ridiculed it unsparingly. As to Fox, the First Lord sheltered himself under

¹³⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, November 9, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 328.

¹³⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 8, 1754: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 218.

¹⁴⁰ It is interesting to note the very low political value which Pitt was forced to set upon his services at this time. Two weeks later the case would have been different.

the fragile excuse that 'the King would not do it'. To Hardwicke he revealed his certainty that the meaning could only be a triple alliance to gain control of the Commons and thence of the Administration.¹⁴¹ Without some phantom to conjure up terror, Newcastle would have found life unbearable.

Meanwhile the session at last opened, on November 14, and Sir George Lee—by the courtesy of Leicester House¹⁴²—moved the address in the Commons. Potter essayed to clamour against France, but Egmont gave no cause for alarm, and the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer made Newcastle banish all doubts of the fitness of his chosen assistant.¹⁴³ Legge pretended, however, to be sorry at the King's pleasure in his feat, and—to use Robinson's expression—he dreaded being 'flattered higher than his wings could reach'.¹⁴⁴

Election disputes were of necessity the first problems for the House to deal with. In cases in which Marlborough and Sandwich were concerned against the Administration, Fox took a leading part on behalf of his friends. Petitions against the sitting members for St. Michael easily obtained the sympathy of Newcastle, who entertained grave doubts of support from any candidate of Sandwich's; and the Earl's effort to defer a

¹⁴¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 17, 1754: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 233.

¹⁴² The matter was arranged by Stone, on Newcastle's behalf.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 21, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 203.

¹⁴³ Undated letter of Hardwicke's: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 344.

¹⁴⁴ Robinson to Newcastle, November 16, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 350.

hearing was defeated by a majority that showed no sluggishness in perception. Fox, however, let no opportunity slip of crossing the Duke of Newcastle, and Pitt, at first neutral, had finally thrown in his lot with the Cumberlands.¹⁴⁵

The Fox-Pitt alliance was partly responsible for some new troubles among the 'Cousinhood', as Pitt and the Grenvilles and Lyttelton were called. In the first place the Paymaster and the Grenvilles had deeply resented Lyttelton's efforts in the spring to reconcile them with the Administration, and protested that they would speak for themselves. Lyttelton, both because he had been under obligations to Pelham¹⁴⁶ and on account of the compliment he felt to be implied in Newcastle's selection of him as representative of the Pittites, was now reluctant to join the others in Pitt's informal opposition; hence a coolness had arisen between Sir George and the Paymaster.¹⁴⁷

At this juncture the discomfited Cofferer found a second opportunity of filling the post of messenger for the Administration. The Duke of Bedford had taken no part in the Cumberlands' intrigues of the summer and autumn, beyond a reported willingness to become reconciled, and was still reigning over his little court at Woburn in contemptuous isolation. Lyttelton, having heard through the younger Walpole that it was not

¹⁴⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 352-3.

¹⁴⁶ See page 80.

¹⁴⁷ Grenville's Narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 429-30.

impossible to beguile him into the Administration, obtained Newcastle's blessing for the mission, and, repairing to the Duke's old adversary, he offered him *carte blanche* in Newcastle's name. Nothing could have better pleased the proud little Duke who had so long been thirsting for revenge. But as if an indignant repulse from Woburn were not sufficient mortification, the wretched scapegoat found that his patron would glibly deny all complicity whatever, and when Bedford turned to punish the messenger by reporting the affair to Pitt, the breach in the Cousinhood was complete.¹⁴⁸ Sir George was tempted now to write to his late host and palliate the circumstances of his negotiation, but Newcastle had time to prevent such an exposure.¹⁴⁹

In the meantime, though no open hostilities could be shown by two occupants of ministerial office, the First Lord had to encounter an insidious opposition that made his political life unbearable. On the afternoon of the 25th a discussion took place in the Commons on the petition of the disreputable Wilkes against his successful rival, Delaval by name. It would be hard to say which of the two was the more steeped in corruption, but Delaval defended himself in so witty a speech that the House was convulsed with laughter.

¹⁴⁸ Walpole to Bentley, December 18, 1754, *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 271.

¹⁴⁹ A letter to Bedford, December 2, 1755 (apparently submitted to Newcastle but never sent): Add. MSS., 32737, f. 410. Perhaps we may find in this a reason for Lyttelton's appointment in 1755 as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

This roused Wilkes's friend the Paymaster, who strode down from the gallery, and worked himself into mild hysteria at the levity of a dignified House of Commons on such a subject as bribery. The self-righteous occupant of a Newcastle borough was loud and plaintive in his warning, lest they 'should degenerate into a little assembly serving no other purpose than to register the edicts of *one too-powerful subject*'. Such indeed was the eloquence of Pitt that the 'mote in his own eye' was doubly unnoticeable to men whose diet, so long prescribed, was taken as a matter of course; and Fox declared the speech 'the finest . . . Pitt ever spoke'. But it was rumoured that the First Lord's digestion was temporarily impaired.¹⁵⁰

The evening of the same day an even more serious blow was dealt, for it held up to ridicule the First Lord's most trusted pawn. Pitt, for the purpose of eulogizing Lord Fane, a friend of the Bedfords, moved a later day for a Colchester petition, since that of Reading—in which Fane was concerned—would demand particular attention. 'This need not have called up a secretary of state (as Fox wrote of it afterwards); but Sir Thomas Robinson rose and with warmth . . . asserted, that it would be a short cause and, on the side of the sitting member, a *poor* cause.'¹⁵¹

Pitt handled Sir Thomas roughly for his in-

¹⁵⁰ Fox to Hartington, November 26, 1754: Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 146.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

discretion ; and when the latter complained in response that he had never been ambitious for the office he now held, the Paymaster affected to believe him, and then aiming beyond the well-intentioned instrument, he added that he 'thought him as able as many that had of late years occupied that office or was likely to fill it'.

Fox went still further in humiliating the in-offensive Secretary. If one of the greatest men in the House, he remarked drily, pronounced it a poor cause, it would indeed be a poor cause ; but he imputed it to his inexperience ; he was the first great man, and Fox hoped would be the last, that ever pronounced on a cause unheard.¹⁵² He excused Sir Thomas on the ground that his honourable service abroad accounted for his total ignorance in the present procedure.

It was the long-expected crisis in this war of revenge. 'Thus,' wrote Fox, 'we are already got to a point which I hardly thought a whole session could have brought us to.'¹⁵³

Three days later the thrills of minor men were again aroused by thrusts of oratory. Taking advantage of the usual allusion to Jacobitism in a discussion of the Mutiny Bill, Pitt lashed the Attorney-General with scarce a cessation in two ringing speeches.¹⁵⁴ On every occasion possible

¹⁵² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 355.

¹⁵³ Fox to Hartington, November 26, 1754.

¹⁵⁴ The details are given in Fox's letter to Hartington, November 28, 1754: Waldegrave, p. 150.

Pitt sought to humble Murray and Fox to vex Robinson. The Attorney-General appeared little consoled by Granville's encouraging remark that 'resolution should be shown';¹⁵⁵ temper and subtlety were hard to preserve when personalities were so freely indulged in.

Fox explained to Hartington that the purpose of Newcastle, Hardwicke and Granville, to depress the Commons, could only be expected to meet with resistance;¹⁵⁶ and he had no fear that the Devonshires would desert their friends despite the First Lord's boast of Cavendish regularity. Such an overlordship, in Fox's belief, was anything but Whiggism; and it is interesting to compare this standpoint of the great *parvenu* in social and political prominence with his former dread of an aristocratic oligarchy in connexion with the Clandestine Marriage Bill. About this time the Secretary-at-War and the Paymaster had a conference of two hours, no doubt to review their situation, but Fox was chary of professions;¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Waldegrave, pp. 31-2.

¹⁵⁶ Fox is apparently charging the inner clique of the Cabinet with having too much power. Robinson and Holder-ness, being ciphers, required no mention. Of course, to Fox the House of Commons was everything; and he believed, like Pitt and Legge, that a member of that body should wield the principal authority.

¹⁵⁷ Fox gives us no inkling of what went on at the meeting, except that its purpose was a discussion of their situation on the expectation of overtures to one of them from the Ministry. 'A difficult conversation,' Fox writes; 'I managed it, I think, as well as such a conversation could be managed. I am sorry

there was not much sympathy between these comrades-at-arms after all.

But the aspirants to an absolutist ministry felt that such shocks as these were all too liable to prove fatal to their tower of strength. It was not in Newcastle's programme that his trusted slaves should be held up to the derision of the multitude, not even as a foil to their omniscient master. It was less bearable when he himself was exposed as a prey to demagogues. No, clearly such behaviour could not go on. Pitt, His Majesty might, of course, dismiss, and Fox must certainly be spoken to, informed of the King's 'dislike of his manner and connexion', as well as warned of the danger to Fox himself, if he should continue such misdemeanours; he might even be bought by the hope of His Majesty's favour, but certainly some way must be devised for breaking his connexion with Pitt.¹⁵⁸ Either the latter must be dismissed from the King's service, or one or the other of them be admitted further into the mystic councils, and this could hardly be granted to Pitt, considering the aversion of the Closet. Something, the First Lord knew, must be done. Yet on the eve of resolution his ambitious spirit still rebelled. Would he be really safe if either of his great enemies were in his *intima sacra*?

it is too long to give you any account of it in a letter.'—Fox to Hartington, November 28, 1754.

■ Memoranda for the King, November, 1754: Add. MSS., 32995, f. 355.

While his mind thus wavered, a fleeting ray of hope seemed to suggest the word 'Tory'; and as quick to show sudden temerity as he was to yield to imagined terrors, the Duke wrote to Hardwicke significantly of 'two removals', and what might be done with the *nominal* Opposition. Egmont should be immediately brought into the fold, and Legge, whose chicanery he had at last penetrated, might be transplanted in favour of Sir George Lee.¹⁵⁹ Pitt told Fox that such a galaxy (with Murray added) meant 'the *Testament politique* of Bolingbroke lodged in great hands'.¹⁶⁰

But such attempts were mere strutting in the face of ruin. The inevitable issue faced Newcastle that he must either dismiss Pitt or acquire Fox. The former alternative might sever the alliance, but would it silence either tongue? and might not the Paymaster be driven further into opposition? After much anxiety of heart capitulation triumphed over revenge.¹⁶¹

Meanwhile the King had already summoned Fox to justify his conduct. Pitt's wordy rhapsodies and rhodomontades he had not the patience to hear, but Fox he knew and liked. The King inquired pointedly of the Secretary-at-War whether he had united with Pitt to oppose his

¹⁵⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 28, 1754: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 230.

¹⁶⁰ Fox to Hartington, November 28, 1754.

¹⁶¹ Regarding Pitt the final decision was 'to leave him under the uncertainty in which he now is'.—Minute, Powis House, December 10, 1754: Add. MSS., 32995, f. 368.

measures. Fox denied that he had done so ; which, if true, demonstrated the entire informality of the union. But when the King asked him if he would support the royal measures with the spirit in which he was so conspicuous, his visitor replied that it must depend upon his means for doing so ; whereupon the King commended his ability and honesty, deprecated his warmth, and extracted a promise that he would submit to negotiation.¹⁶²

The delicate task was now confided to Lord Waldegrave, governor of the Prince of Wales, a man who could be called a friend of all parties and who was universally esteemed and respected. Newcastle fashion, it was determined to possess Fox with the least possible concession, and the first step was inevitably to dangle before him that well-worn and overrated phraseology : ‘ respect and confidence of the Ministers,’ and ‘ grace and favour from His Majesty ’.¹⁶³

But the Newcastles must certainly have thought Fox a simpleton (or else they could make themselves believe anything), if they entertained for a moment the notion that anything so intangible, so assuredly transitory, would seduce him into their camp. They were magnanimous enough to drop hints of an employment more desirable by £1,500 per annum than his present one ; they were willing to keep the Pay Office for him, whenever

¹⁶² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 361-2.

¹⁶³ Projected answer for Lord Waldegrave: Add. MSS. 32995, f. 58.

it should be vacant (this Waldegrave at once declared would never be considered¹⁶⁴); but all such propositions were mere waste of time and mental energy. Not only would Fox in no wise relish the imputation of being bought by money,¹⁶⁵ but he positively declined to consider an office now possessed by his ally.¹⁶⁶ In fact it was unnecessary

¹⁶⁴ Memorandum, December 3, 1754: Add. MSS., 32995, f. 360.

¹⁶⁵ Fox to Collinson, December 22, 1754: Add. MSS., 28727, f. 42.

¹⁶⁶ Fox to Pitt, *Chatham Corres.* I. 125. This letter and others from the *Chatham Corres.*, purporting to belong to April, 1755, are, for some cause, misdated. The reasons for this conclusion are as follows:

(1) There is no apparent evidence elsewhere of a negotiation with Fox in April, 1755—not even in the Newcastle papers, or in the printed memoirs of Waldegrave, who was the mediator employed according to these letters.

(2) There would be no occasion for such a negotiation then, Fox having already become a member of the Cabinet Council; and yet the latter is thrice distinctly mentioned in this correspondence attributed to April.

(3) The question is discussed in these letters of giving Fox ‘the lead in the House of Commons’. But this point we know—from the documents printed in Liechtenstein’s *Holland House* and from the Newcastle memoranda—was settled in December, 1754.

(4) The letters, ‘Fox to the King’, in *Holland House* and *Chatham Corres.*, though dated respectively December 10, 1754, and April 25, 1755, are almost identical; and an insertion, which was in the former, and not in the latter, was due to a suggestion of the Duke of Cumberland’s after the writing of the first draft. We find, moreover, that the last sentence in Pitt’s copy is bracketed—undoubtedly because there was a question of expunging it, and this was done, as we see by the *Holland House* copy. We should remark finally in this connexion that the date of the latter document is correctly

to recall that the King had spoken to him of removing Pitt for his benefit,¹⁶⁷ for Fox to perceive

reproduced from the original among the Collinson papers in the British Museum.

(5) Too many letters in the *Chatham Corres.* bear the same date. A reading of the contents of the six letters, dated April 25, makes it almost impossible to believe that they could all have been written on the same day.

(6) The fact that Fox's name appeared in the *Gazette* on April 26 (as the editor of the *Chatham Corres.* observes) as one of the Council of Regency to act in the King's absence is of no significance, for Fox was already a Cabinet Councillor at that time, and no elaborate negotiation would be required to admit him to the Regency. Furthermore the Cabinet Council, not the Regency, is the object mentioned in these letters, as we have already noted in '(2)'.

(7) Finally, such cordial relations between Pitt and Fox, as these letters would certainly imply, were extremely unlikely to have existed in April, four months after Fox had become an ally of the Newcastles; whereas at the present time Pitt may have supposed that Fox would use his influence to procure him some promotion.

It would seem, therefore, that this correspondence belongs to December. The so-called 'Remarks on the Preceding Correspondence' (I. 134) may, on the contrary, belong to April, for a distinct allusion is made to an 'overture made through Mr. Walpole', which, we know, took place in April; or it may possibly have been written long afterward at some time when Pitt was reviewing the experiences of the past, and by confusing the sequence of events was led to date wrongly all these letters. Such a solution is not a little plausible from the fact that one of Fox's letters (I. 128) in this collection bears at the end simply the word 'Friday', and therefore may not, originally, have been dated at all. The only letter which has its date unbracketed in this published collection is the last one of the series.

¹⁶⁷ Fox to Pitt, *Chatham Corres.* I. 125. The King must have made this suggestion during the audience of November 29, already mentioned.

the gauzy transparency of the Newcastle motives. To have turned out one ally and substituted the other would have been a stroke of politics *par excellence*.

Waldegrave gathered that Fox would like his present office made into a third Secretaryship of State ; but this notion was the outcome of one of the first meetings, when suitors and sued were equally bashful about coming to terms. Perhaps Fox became disgusted by these ' soundings ' ; at all events he finally came out boldly with the demand for the leadership in the Commons, tempered, it is true, with a willingness to forgo the enjoyment of the mysteries behind.¹⁶⁸

But Newcastle had even less desire now to give away that responsible position than when he had offered Fox a curtailed authority on the 13th of March. To yield an inch to a man of ability seemed worse than to yield a mile to one of Robinson's calibre ; the very thought was horrible. No, it were better to make his royal puppet say that there had been a misunderstanding, that His Majesty could not have consented to give him ' the lead ' in the Commons ; in fact there should be no acknowledged leader there. It is amusing to notice that the Duke stopped Waldegrave short, when the proposal of Fox was reported, and declared that the King could never have intended it ; he (Newcastle) ' would ask the King '. It is only necessary to add

¹⁶⁸ Memorandum, December 3, 1754 : Add. MSS., 32995, f. 360.

in this connexion that His Majesty confirmed the Duke's opinion ¹⁶⁹—how or why is unfortunately not writ in the chronicles of the Newcastles.

Fox was now a little puzzled as to what he should do. He was asked to put his demands in writing, and it was hard for him to decide whether to tell the King virtually that he would have nothing further to do with the affair, or to catch at an idea of the Duke (it sounds so like Newcastle!) of acting the rôle of Leader without recognition as such.¹⁷⁰ It happened that Pitt was wholly in his confidence throughout the negotiation, and whether or not a meeting that night with the Paymaster settled the question, Fox finally fell back upon Devonshire's old scheme of the Cabinet Council ¹⁷¹ in addition to his demand of the 'lead'. He would desire 'no change of employment' or 'pecuniary advantage', but only 'a mark of His Majesty's favour'—to give his position weight ¹⁷²—and of this request there could be but one interpretation.

Since then, the First Lord's caprice had robbed him of the nominal leadership, Fox proceeded to write his revised demand, and both Cumberland

¹⁶⁹ Fox to Pitt: *Chatham Corres.* I. 124.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.: Memorandum, December 3, 1754, Add. MSS., 32995, f. 360.

¹⁷¹ Urged now by his friend, Marlborough. — Walpole, *Memoirs*, I. 363. We can imagine with what avidity the Cumberland party would push forward its most prominent member. Marlborough, like Legge, had an object before him.

¹⁷² Fox to the King, December 10, 1754: *Liechtenstein, Holland House*, I. 47.

and Pitt were consulted with respect to the wording. The former warned his friend against compromising his future, and strongly advised that the insertion 'in the present state of the House of Commons' be made to prefix his willingness to remain in his present employment ;¹⁷³ but Pitt objected to this on the ground that it would signify, as regards Fox, a surrender, throw suspicion upon his own ambition, and indicate the existence of an alliance, of which there was clearly enough talk already.¹⁷⁴ Fox doubted the force of both the latter objections, and accepted the Duke's suggestions. He told Pitt, however, that he would take upon himself all responsibility with the King, and, having denied in general the allegation that they were in alliance, he would tell His Majesty alone privately that he 'could not venture on the weak scheme, unless strengthened by Pitt's acquiescence'.¹⁷⁵ In his final letter to the Paymaster on the subject, he declared that nothing was so terrible as the thought of themselves 'in conjunction with ' the Newcastles and 'in their service'.¹⁷⁶

Meanwhile the hint had been promptly taken by

¹⁷³ Fox to Pitt: *Chatham Corres.* I. 129. That is, 'in the present state of the House of Commons,' Fox 'desired no change of employment'.

¹⁷⁴ Pitt to Fox: *Chatham Corres.* I. 130.

¹⁷⁵ Fox to Pitt: *ibid.* I. 131.

¹⁷⁶ Fox to Pitt: *ibid.* I. 132. Fox's inclusion of Pitt would seem to indicate that whilst their separation was plainly inevitable, he desired to break the bond between them as gently as he could.

the anxious chiefs. Immediately on receipt of Fox's message (dated December 10) the First Lord, the Chancellor and the Lord President met to consider whether any lesser employment would be likely of acceptance, and were forced to conclude in the negative.¹⁷⁷ Accordingly, decision having been made, the King replied to Fox two days later through Waldegrave, that the Secretary-at-War's terms were accepted, and room would be made for him in the Cabinet Council.¹⁷⁸ But the Newcastles fortified themselves against a possible danger by adding in the message (for the King was only a shadowy figure throughout) a distinct assurance that though Fox should possess the actual 'lead', Sir Thomas Robinson should continue to possess priority in the Commons, and the new Councillor should have no separate power or confidence outside the Ministers.¹⁷⁹ Thus was Fox caught and caged for the King's service.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Minute, Powis House, December 10, 1754: Add. MSS., 32995, f. 368.

¹⁷⁸ The King to Fox, December 12, 1754: Liechtenstein, I. 48.

¹⁷⁹ The King's message to Waldegrave, December 12, 1754 (Add. MSS., 32995, f. 374), and to Fox, December 12 (Liechtenstein, I. 48). At the last moment Newcastle seems to have feared that Fox would not sell out so readily, for we find him writing, 'The King to talk strongly to resist Mr. Fox, if he begins to act wrong.'—Add. MSS., 32995, f. 372.

¹⁸⁰ Waldegrave's comments on the negotiation are worth noting. 'Fox,' he writes, 'during the whole negotiation behaved like a man of sense and a man of honour—very frank, very explicit, and not very unreasonable; but the Duke of Newcastle lost all the merit of every concession by conferring

Whose was the victory ? For the moment the winner could be only one person, and that Fox. He was careless in many respects of his political welfare ; besides, his inherent good nature recoiled from disappointing the King, even a king so ministry-ridden as George II ; and such, in fact, is the tone of a letter written afterwards to a friend, in which he also says, ‘ I would have no pecuniary advantage lest it be said that Friend Fox was bribed.’¹⁸¹ If he were not, in effect, ‘ bribed,’ we can only explain that he wanted the promotion he received, and swallowed the whole mouthful for purposes of his own. But beneath this undoubtedly there lurked the feeling of intense resentment for the indignity dealt him in March ; he had plotted, provoked, resisted, and now at last had forced the Duke’s hand ; and that was sweet revenge ! His qualities were appreciated far more than they would have been had he bowed to the perfidy of eight months ago, and he had given his enemy a period of intrigue and misery that was in itself a pleasing vengeance. Now he was securely in the Cabinet and enabled in some degree to promote his patron’s policy with greater prospect of success ; and that, too, would be striking his foe. The motives of Fox may have been mixed and many,

his favours with bad grace, and it was easy to foresee that this peace and amity would not be long.’—*Memoirs*, p. 34. Waldegrave was undeniably right.

¹⁸¹ Fox to Collinson, December 22, 1754: Add. MSS., 28727, f. 42.

but the spectre of his downfall had not yet cast its shadow.

It is, however, the broader and deeper effects of an action that must be weighed for its justification ; and as motives make men, so men, following their motives, affect the destiny of their State and their own fortunes within it. Fox knew the innate rottenness of the machine of which he submitted to become a wheel. He knew also the vigour and independence of the man with whom he had been connected. Between these two he chose the former, and in that act lay the greatest political blunder in his career. Had he continued in the union with William Pitt, Time would have claimed his exploits, and Public Opinion would have dragged him to the top. But he chose to board a derelict rather than to sink it, and ere his enemy recovered new vitality, the star of Henry Fox was for ever dimmed.

CHAPTER IV

THE MINISTRY AND THE WAR PARTY

THE termination of this dangerous alliance gave Newcastle at last a breathing spell. True, the invasion of his Cabinet was somewhat humiliating ; but having successfully separated his two foes in the Commons, the Duke had no reason to anticipate conspiracy in the Council ; and peace once more in Parliament seemed just then the surest cure for the maladies of the Ministry. Nevertheless when Fox had privately renounced his connexion with Pitt, the advantage of apprising the latter and thereby adding emphasis to the separation was too tempting a one to be missed.¹ As for the Paymaster, if he had any comments to make, we are not told what they were ; but it was certainly unnecessary to inform him that the alliance with Fox was at an end.

The King was probably the most dissatisfied of all who had been interested in the affair. The stubborn Sovereign was by no means convinced that the acquisition of the Secretary-at-War was a better remedy than the alternative of turning

¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 369. Walpole's suspicions, however, must not be allowed too great weight in view of his prejudice against Newcastle and the Chancellor.

out the Paymaster, and although he let the Chancellor harp on the agreement that Fox should have no interest in the Closet outside the Ministry, the audience which His Lordship received on the 14th of December was in many respects rather stormy.

After an amicable discussion of the main features of the political outlook, the King suddenly turned upon the Chancellor with the demand, 'But, My Lord, what is your opinion about turning out Pitt?', 'and then followed the question,' wrote Hardwicke the day afterwards, 'with his usual description of him and censure of his behaviour.'

The Chancellor was not a man easily embarrassed, and his shrewdness of judgement invariably saved him from indiscretion. He was quite ready to concur in the King's denunciation of the Paymaster, but strongly deprecated the notion of removing him; and he cleverly threw the responsibility upon Fox, who, he said, had excused himself from 'taking a personal part' against Pitt, if the latter were to be dismissed.²

² This would certainly seem to imply that Fox was prepared to oppose Pitt, if the latter, in pursuance of their old policy, continued his attacks upon the Ministry. There is no better evidence that the alliance was dissolved. On the other hand, we may perceive that Fox was equally determined not to compass the sacrifice of his old ally. Thus his refusal to countenance what would have signified—so far as he himself was concerned—a mean betrayal of a former ally was sufficient excuse for the Newcastle's to put forward in opposing the King's desire. Hardwicke's object was probably twofold: not only did he save Pitt from dismissal, but he

‘And I assure you,’ interrupted the King, ‘he’s done himself no good by it.’

This was exactly what the Chancellor wanted. He had succeeded in making the Monarch believe that the real efficiency of the new Councillor depended upon the continuance of Pitt in nominal favour; and the King, after a final fling at the man he detested, consented to leave the matter in abeyance.³

The Paymaster was little aware how near he had come to losing the office which he needed all the more now that in the course of the autumn he had taken a wife.⁴ Perhaps actuated by a sense of his danger, or possibly undecided as to his plans, he discreetly held his tongue, and there was not a word of reproach for Fox, or any audible lament on his own impotence. Indeed, considering the fact that in spite of the obligation he owed to Newcastle for his seat in Parliament, and to that nobleman’s brother for his present office, he had nevertheless—as Lyttelton took occasion to

threw upon Fox the responsibility for the King’s disappointment. By so doing, he would encourage the King to dislike his new Cabinet Councillor, and consequently preclude the likelihood of Fox’s acquiring a separate strength in the Closet. Such was a possibility which we have seen that the Newcastles had dreaded.

³ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 15, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 449.

⁴ Pitt’s extravagant tastes always led him to live beyond his means, and dismissal would have meant the loss of a salary of £3,000 a year. Lord Temple, his brother-in-law, had to come to the rescue when the King at last dismissed him, in 1755.

point out ⁵—been so ungrateful as to assist Fox in forcing the Duke's hand, it must be candidly acknowledged that the Ministry were treating him far better than he deserved. Yet the Chancellor and his imperious friend were not the kind to overlook an injury from a mere impulse of charity ; they saw, rather, that their interest lay in letting the Paymaster alone.⁶ To a man of Pitt's temperament, this ignoring of him was perhaps the hardest punishment they could have inflicted.

Fox, for his part, appeared perfectly content. The Duke of Devonshire may have smiled when he told Hardwicke that the Secretary-at-War was 'very well satisfied with what he had done, and believed he would go on very well', for the old Duke had really proved himself a most successful schemer ; and an inroad of the Cumberlands into the Newcastle phalanx was something to produce real pleasure. Fox, having called on Hardwicke the evening of the 15th, received the latter's congratulations, and the Chancellor was pleased that the friends of the Administration were at least not offended by the new promotion.⁷ Whether the Princess was mentally included in the number

⁵ Lyttelton's Observations : Phillimore, III. 477.

⁶ In resigning, Pitt would have been regarded simply as a discontented office-seeker ; but if dismissed, he would undoubtedly have attracted all the popularity which naturally attaches itself to an ill-used opponent of an unpopular Ministry. Pitt would then be in a position to enter an avowed opposition—and with excellent prospects.

⁷ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 15, 1754.

cannot be said, but the Chancellor was soon afterward given reason to believe that she was greatly alarmed.⁸

The new Cabinet Councillor subsequently delighted his employer by speaking favourably of Sir Thomas Robinson, upon which the King remarked keenly, 'Now Fox will have no pretence.'⁹ But if this was good logic, it showed too little knowledge of Fox. Perhaps a reason for the unswerving fidelity which he exhibited for certain friends during his career was the fact that he never served faithfully those whom he had cause to despise; it certainly should be noted that he told Doddington—just when is not recorded—that he '*neither had, nor would have any obligation to the Duke of Newcastle*'. If the First Lord took him for a friend, he would, according to Doddington, only deceive himself, as Fox never pretended to be one. This was said to Halifax some months later.¹⁰

There was no evident intention of forgiving Legge, because certain difficulties had been solved; and Sir George Lee consented to succeed him if the Ministry insisted.¹¹ Neither was the design to

⁸ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 21, 1754: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 232.

⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 26, 1754: *ibid.*, f. 238.

¹⁰ Doddington, *Diary*, May 24, 1755.

¹¹ On the condition, however, that he should retain his present employment with the Princess. Sir George believed his health too uncertain to warrant his anticipating a long tenure of office; and he wished to guard against a chance of future

secure Egmont abandoned in the face of the greater acquisition from the Cumberlands.¹² The King delighted Newcastle by readily consenting that the former should become Comptroller of the Household in the room of Lord Hillsborough, and have a seat in the Privy Council as well. This would of course mean that something else would be given to Fox's friend as compensation ; and the Duke wrote to his ' Oracle ' (as he sometimes called Hardwicke) that he had obtained ' a sort of tacit consent to find out something for Legge '. In fact, ' What shall we find for Legge ? ' ¹³ was for some time the chief question under consideration, for the Pelham family were ever apprehensive of incurring enmities, and to Newcastle's mind every man could be appeased by emolument. The Duke was also pleased to observe that the Secretary-at-War showed no signs of harbouring jealousy on account of the favours shown to the Tory leader, whom he had once openly despised.

isolation.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 21, 1754. Lee's caution was justified by later events.

¹² In justifying Fox's promotion and the prospective ' system ' for the Commons, Newcastle writes, ' What has been done has been done by mature consideration with, and by the approbation of, My Lord Chancellor. We watch every motion, and are both fully convinced that hitherto the part we have taken is the most prudent and the most safe. We only want to complete our system and our security by making Sir George Lee Chancellor of the Exchequer and giving some considerable employment to My Lord Egmont.'—Newcastle to Lady K. Pelham, January 25, 1754: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 260.

¹³ Quoted from Newcastle's letter of December 26.

On the 25th died the superannuated Lord Privy Seal, whom Newcastle had once tried in vain to remove ; and the vacant post was promptly conferred upon the Duke of Marlborough, while the Duke of Rutland, another relative of the deceased, became Lord Steward. The latter appointment Hardwicke felt to be a distinctly strong one, on account of his family connexions ;¹⁴ and Anson was for sounding the new Lord Gower as a possible pupil to be educated for the Ministry.¹⁵ It certainly appeared as if the Administration were pluming itself on a fairly complete capture of the Cumberlands, who now possessed five votes in the Cabinet, with a chance of gaining more. But might not Fox discover some strength therein ?

His Majesty, according to the Duke, had recently flattered him by saying, ' I have made you, as it were, First Minister ; you will be informed of everything,' and Fox told Granville the King had expressed the same to him in even stronger terms.¹⁶ This declaration, though later much modified, may have been far too sweet a draught for one of Newcastle's unquenchable thirst for power ; at any rate the Duke was destined to spend the last days of 1754 in the deepest humiliation it had perhaps ever been his lot to suffer.

¹⁴ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 26, 1754 (first letter of this date): Add. MSS., 32737, f. 485.

¹⁵ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 26, 1754 (second letter of this date): *ibid.*, p. 487.

¹⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 2, 1755: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 27.

An appointment being needed for the well-paid office of Groom of the Stole, the King expressed decided preference for the Earl of Rochford. It was only natural that His Majesty should desire the new appointment to be in accord with his personal liking, but to this the veteran dispenser of patronage was seemingly loth to consent. Newcastle and Hardwicke agreed that Rochford was not to their taste,¹⁷ and the Duke (thinking possibly of Dorset) would have had the post left open till some political exigency should bring to light a fitting nominee.¹⁸ In the meantime, at the elder Walpole's instance,¹⁹ he urged the promotion of the Earl of Orford to a vacancy in the Bedchamber,²⁰ perhaps with a view of inculcating forgetfulness of the past.

But George II had always known his chief servant better than the latter gave him credit for, and when the Duke opened his plan, His Majesty told him with much asperity to confine himself to the Treasury. 'You will have enough to do to set that right,' was the King's retort. 'You have been attacked or objected to for meddling with everything.'

The words were like a thunder-bolt. Newcastle, in all likelihood, cowered, as no mention is made

¹⁷ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 29, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 516.

¹⁸ Newcastle to Leeds, January 6, 1755: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 136.

¹⁹ Walpole to Newcastle, December 26, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 491.

²⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 2, 1755.

of a reply in the long letter that he wrote relating the episode. Perhaps bitterer than the actual affront to his face was the knowledge that the Secretary-at-War had used much the same language regarding him, and had evidently convinced the King. The Duke was certain that Fox was poisoning the royal mind against him. Rochford, he hinted, was but a creature of the Cumberlands, and the many candidates whom Fox was pushing for emolument, as well as the Duke's own liberality to the Albemarles,²¹ would make the world believe that he (Newcastle) had become a mere dependant of the Secretary-at-War. Thoroughly crushed, the veteran time-server begged the faithful Chancellor to win back the King from the hands of the conspirator and pluck out the sting of his cruel words. 'I leave myself entirely to your Lordship, to dispose of me as you please. . . . Pray go and see the King. When you are once in the Closet, I have no direction or advice to give.'²²

Not content with the letter to his mentor, the Duke wrote also to Andrew Stone, begging him to see Hardwicke that evening and give him a detailed account of the tragedy. The greatest mortification of all is apparently in the concluding remark: 'The public will ascribe it to the late transaction

²¹ The family of Lady Caroline Fox's uncle, Lord Albemarle, who died heavily in debt during December 1754. Correspondence between Fox and Newcastle on the subject may be found in Add. MSS., 32737, ff. 501, 524.

²² Newcastle to Hardwicke ('most private'), January 2, 1755: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 27.

with Mr. Fox.' ²³ To have it thought that the new Cabinet Councillor—and not he—had been the real conqueror, was something not to be borne.

Hardwicke's friendship never proved wanting in the hour of need. He willingly went to Court, and found the Closet in good humour. But when he spoke to the King of a vacant colonelcy for his son Joseph, the royal graciousness suddenly expired and the sign for dismissal was given. Newcastle had taken pains to write that he had had the intention 'of mentioning Joe, to Fox, but upon consideration thought it was better not; the Duke ²⁴ might make ill use of it, and he could hardly think Fox would make a good one'.²⁵ This had been a politic stroke to put at the end of his appeal, for the Chancellor's dearest ambition was the advancement of his sons—a consideration which more than once repaid him for the exacting friendship of the First Lord.

But His Lordship's imperturbable dignity was far from being shattered by any whim of Royalty, and, ignoring the King's sudden turn, he began to assure him how completely the latter had misinterpreted the Duke's suggestion to suspend the appointment of a groom of the stole.

The King blazed out at this. 'The Duke of Newcastle meddles in things he has nothing to do with. He would dispose of my Bedchamber,

²³ Newcastle to Stone, January 2, 1755.

²⁴ Cumberland was commonly spoken of as 'the Duke'.

²⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, January 2, 1755.

which is a personal service about myself, and I won't suffer anybody to meddle in. I know what he wanted.'

Hardwicke saw that his last resource would now be needed to defend his friend, and forthwith laid himself open to blame for having thought of Dorset, whom the King had spoken of recalling from Ireland, as a proper choice for the Stole ; but Dorset should never hear of it.

' Could you think,' replied the King, ' I would make an old man of seventy my Groom of the Stole ? '

Hardwicke answered gravely that that objection had not occurred to him. He then turned the subject to a careful description of the manifold ramifications of the First Lord's duties, and assured the King that whereas it was designed to spare him all this business, it was always conceded that final decision lay with His Majesty. ' Ministers,' he impressed upon the King, ' bear all the blame and resentment of the disappointed persons, and they can never carry on his affairs without some weight in the disposition of favours.'

The King answered that he ' had seen too much of that in the country already ', and Hardwicke was forced to continue his explanations and remonstrances ; but all to no purpose.²⁶ His Majesty was out of humour and did not disguise the fact.

²⁶ Hardwicke to Newcastle, January 3, 1755: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 63.

Stone wrote to Newcastle the day afterwards that it was highly probable that Rochford had already been notified of the King's intention to promote him,²⁷ and it eventually turned out that the royal will had its way, even to the extent of giving the Earl of Essex the place that Orford coveted.²⁸ For once in his life George II had overruled his Ministers.

One point upon which both Stone and the Chancellor disagreed with Newcastle was the attributing of the episode and the appointment to Fox.²⁹ Hardwicke told His Grace frankly that he believed the Secretary-at-War had no interest in the three candidates the Duke mentioned to Stone, and professed to impute it all to the Duke of Cumberland and his sister, together with Lady Yarmouth, who perhaps meant no harm. In reference to the royal censure Hardwicke was

²⁷ Stone to Newcastle, January 3, 1755: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 69.

²⁸ Robinson to Newcastle, January 2, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 31; Newcastle to Walpole, January 2, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 41.

²⁹ Hardwicke told Newcastle that he purposely refrained from mentioning Fox in his audience on the 2nd, as he was convinced that the King would only upbraid him for his prejudice.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, January 3, 1755. An interesting instance of how Newcastle could deliberately misrepresent facts when it suited his purpose may be found in his letter to Walpole, January 2, expressing regret at Orford's disappointment. In explaining Fox's promotion to the Cabinet, he says that he 'consented to a measure to satisfy some great persons'. Presumably the King and the Duke of Cumberland are meant.

probably right, but it is not at all improbable that Fox was making use of his audiences with the King to secure benefits for his dependants, and Rochford's accession to the Cabinet was sure to add still further to his strength. Whether, however, Fox was seeking to supplant Newcastle as receiver of applications—a condition the Duke suspected—cannot definitely be determined.

The storm having subsided, the Duke, though perhaps somewhat the worse for his handling, was at last able to breathe freely again; and having written to three aspirants for the Stole that their applications had failed, he turned his mind to the absorbing question of the session of Parliament, now on the eve of reopening. On the whole the prospect was exceedingly bright. It could, of course, never be known when a torrent of abuse might burst forth from the Paymaster, but Fox was regarded as safe, and Egmont had been advised of his elevation to the Privy Council; ³⁰ this last appointment, it was hoped, would reconcile the Princess to the new arrangements. Yet an evidence of the fact that the two ruling spirits felt themselves always to be treading on thin ice may be seen in the apprehension which even the Chancellor suffered at a warning of the King to be 'upon their guard against the next session'. 'Is it possible for His Majesty to know of any scheme to disturb his Administration and not to crush or discourage

³⁰ Newcastle to Egmont, December 24, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 477.

it ? ' ³¹ As the admonition had been given a few days before the rupture in the Closet, the King may simply have been amusing himself at their expense ; or was there after all a lurking suspicion of Fox ?

Shortly before the adjournment the two new recruits fenced over a clause in the Mutiny Bill, which Egmont from long precedent could not resist the temptation of attacking, even though he was virtually pledged to the Administration. The result was an unexpected philippic from Charles Townshend, who treated the Tory leader so mercilessly that the latter is said to have excused himself from accepting the employment which the Ministry had promised him. ³²

On the 29th of January (after the reopening of the session) Fox astonished his fellow members by proposing that the House should sit the following day, which had hitherto been observed as a holiday in commemoration of 'King Charles's martyrdom'. From heirs of the Revolution this extinction of a Jacobite custom should have found no little justification ; but popular assemblies are wont to be sensitively tenacious of their traditions ; and though a warm debate ensued between the Speaker

³¹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 26, 1754.

³² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 364-5. The King was intensely amused at the episode, 'which I treated (wrote Hardwicke) with more gravity'.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 15, 1754: Add. MSS., 32737, f. 449. The office in question was evidently the comptrollership (see p. 230), not the treasurership, as Walpole states.

and the mover, the former's righteousness prevailed.³³ One of the members present attributed Fox's motion to 'an ambition to please his sovereign'.³⁴ Perhaps—considering his recent intrigues in the Closet—there is some truth in the suggestion.

The Sheriff-depute Bill³⁵ was one of the first measures to come up during this session, and the Speaker having 'uttered one of his pompous pathetics couched in short sentences', Fox replied in a speech full of artful derision. This brought Pitt to his feet, who 'wished that Fox had omitted anything like levity on this great principle', and declared that two points of the debate had affected him with sensible pleasure: the admission that judicature ought to be free, and the universal zeal to strengthen the King's hand; liberty, he affirmed, was the best loyalty.

Fox, who had all along argued that the magnitude of the question was exaggerated, retorted that if he had honoured the fire of liberty, he now honoured the smoke. In all of this the Secretary-at-War was supporting the Administration, which regarded the affair as a 'Scotch cabal'; and

³³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 369.

³⁴ *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report I, part 6, pp. 257–8.

³⁵ 'The new Lord-Advocate of Scotland moved that the bill, passed seven years before, for subjecting the sheriff-depute to the King's pleasure during that term, and which was on the point of expiring, after which they were to hold their offices for life, should continue some time longer on the present foot.'—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 369–70.

Newcastle asked West ³⁶ to persuade Fox to attempt a private conversion of the Speaker—a move which seemed to be a wise one, as Murray hinted that Fox would avoid going to lengths with Pitt.³⁷

Another case which occupied much of Parliament's time was a petition lodged against Sandwich's successful candidates from St. Michael. The Chancellor was disposed to believe the Earl's doubtful statement that it was 'a private affair unconnected with party'; but Fox, who espied a lawyer among the petitioners, threw himself into the struggle with such energy that he carried a division in the face of four lawyers and Nugent, all arrayed against the cause of the sitting members.

Newcastle had evidently at first conceded the election to the Cumberlands; but when the Tories saw that the vote was sufficiently close to make their own wishes the deciding factor, they decided that Newcastle's interests were preferable to those of the Secretary-at-War; and consequently offered Newcastle their votes on certain conditions, one of which was that he should dismiss both Fox and Pitt. This demand on the part of the Tories was certainly a gross overestimate of their value. A recent conference of the two orators with

³⁶ Secretary of the Treasury and one of Newcastle's useful political agents.

³⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, February 15, 1754: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 469.

Sandwich had worried the Duke not a little,³⁸ but such a proposal as this was absurd; for the attachment of an extra borough to one party or another was not for one instant to be weighed with the loss of the man he had lowered his dignity to secure. The result was the triumph of Sandwich in the Committee.

But the Tories seemed still to shrink from giving their strength to the man who had uniformly attacked their chieftain, and having met on the morning of March 24 to concert a programme, they resolved to 'cancel all their engagements to defeat Fox'. Thus when the case came up for final decision, the curious anomaly appeared of a house voting down what it had itself decided in a committee. The members for St. Michael were unseated by a majority of 24, and Fox had the small satisfaction of giving Sir George Lee 'a set-down' (to quote Rigby) after the struggle was over.³⁹ Such cabals were but an insignificant feature of a remarkably quiet session.

But the peace which Newcastle enjoyed in Parliament was more than counterbalanced by rebellion in the Cabinet—the place of all places in which the Duke would have thought himself secure. Unfortunately, neglected evils, like neglected wounds, are certain to bring retribution;

³⁸ Newcastle to Hardwicke, February 22, 1755: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 263.

³⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 375–8; Rigby to Bedford, March 24, 1755: *Bedford Papers*, II. 156.

and two problems of foreign policy of the most crucial character confronted the anxious Ministry : they were, in short, the defence of His Majesty's Electorate in Germany, and the adjustment of the difficulties with France in America, now growing daily more serious.

The certainty prevailed more and more strongly as time went on that the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was nothing more than a truce. Besides the differences with France (to be mentioned later), the anger of the Empress-Queen at being disregarded in the decision of the two great Western powers to bring the late war to a conclusion had been in no sense assuaged in the course of succeeding years, and the fact that she owed her imperial dignity largely to Great Britain seemed of slight weight beside the consequences of England's second desertion of Austria in order to make a separate peace with France. Maria Theresa could never be wholly reasonable while the King of Prussia retained Silesia, and hence had arisen her unwillingness to make peace in 1748—a peace in which she was obliged formally to relinquish her rights to that province.

One has frequently to observe that it is often easier for two bitterly hostile powers to become reconciled after a treaty has settled their disputes than it is for the powers united in one war to remain allied in the next struggle. Many of the points of difference between England and Austria had their origin long before the War of

the Austrian Succession had won for Maria Theresa the imperial crown; and little real effort had been expended by either power to adjust difficulties which were certain to become more and more aggravated in the course of succeeding years. By the Utrecht settlement of 1713 the Spanish Netherlands were (as a means of defence against Bourbon ambition) ceded conditionally to the House of Hapsburg; while the interests of the Maritime Powers (as England and Holland were called) were further safeguarded by the re-enactment of commercial restrictions, which dated back to 1648.⁴⁰ Four years later, for better defence against Bourbon ambition, the Court of Vienna was induced to participate in an arrangement known as the 'Barrier Treaties'. This compact—the cause of so much future friction—compelled Austria to bear the expense of the Dutch garrison, now introduced into the barrier towns, besides furnishing an annual subsidy to the Estates-General of Holland; furthermore, the commercial disabilities of the Flemings were now confirmed by treaty. Thus instead of being really a sovereign province of the Empire, the Low Countries were virtually regarded as an Austrian fief, to be held on the understanding of proper defence against the French, and absten-

⁴⁰ One of the best studies of the commercial disabilities of the Belgians, and the struggle which resulted over the question, is Mr. Hertz's article, 'England and the Ostend Company,' *Eng. Hist. Rev.* XXII. 255 et seq.

tion from injury to the interests of the Maritime Powers.

What might have followed, had the Emperor, Charles VI, possessed a greater measure of common sense is, of course, difficult to judge. As a matter of fact he spent most of his life in fruitless and mis-directed intrigues, and a half-hearted endeavour to free his distant subjects from commercial trammels met with decisive failure in 1731. The policy of Charles VI was essentially dynastic, and it was for this reason chiefly that he surrendered to the Maritime Powers and resumed an alliance which his own behaviour (very seldom influenced by Flemish considerations) had some years ago severed. The result was that these two powers alone—whatever their motives ⁴¹—had been true

⁴¹ The motives of England are well analysed by Dr. Bright in his admirable little book, *Maria Theresa* (pp. 23-4). 'It has been customary,' he writes, 'to speak of the chivalrous conduct of England in offering aid to the oppressed Queen. Such a vaunt is futile. The motive of the English people was hatred of the Bourbons; the motive of George and his Minister was the safety of his Hanoverian dominions, and the desire to appear before the world as the arbiter and peacemaker of Germany. To gain this end scheme after scheme was suggested. . . . The advantage of Austria did not appear to be considered; on the contrary, for the sake of strengthening the coalition by the addition of Sardinia, strong pressure was constantly brought to bear upon the Queen to induce her to cede a further portion of her dominions to that encroaching power.' All such dictation, administered without regard to the Queen's cardinal aim (i. e. to recover Silesia), accounts very considerably for the qualified gratitude which Maria Theresa felt for her only important ally.

to their pledges when the Emperor died; but despite their alliance Silesia was lost. And here we have the key to Maria Theresa's foreign policy. The recovery of Silesia—a hope which the Pelham Ministry in their military straits had relinquished—must somehow or other be effected by the Court of Vienna.

In the years 1750–2 the Duke of Newcastle, as we have seen, had attempted without success to buy for the Archduke Joseph the coveted title of King of the Romans. This was the Duke's luxurious prescription for soothing Austria's feelings and effecting a reconciliation. But such a remedy could never hope to reach so deep a malady. It was Kaunitz, the far-sighted ambassador at Paris, who had early become convinced that only by alliance with France (the hereditary enemy of the Hapsburgs) could the lost province be recovered from Frederick. Of this policy the Empress secretly approved, and Kaunitz was made Chancellor of the Empire in 1753.

Meanwhile the old barrier question had arisen again. The Empress would contribute nothing to the refortifying of the barrier towns (dismantled in the late war) unless her Flemish subjects were given some measure of commercial liberty;⁴² while the new Chancellor showed himself bitterly

⁴² The Empress had suspended payment of the annual subsidy stipulated by the Barrier Treaty, and Hanbury Williams, sent in 1753 to remonstrate, was wholly unable to alter her attitude.

hostile to a diplomatic arrangement so obviously humiliating. With every month the relations of England and Austria became more and more strained, and communications from the Duke of Newcastle were so frequently of an irritating nature that Keith, the English ambassador at Vienna, occasionally declined to transmit them.⁴³

Prussia, although conceived to be in the 'system' opposed to England and Austria, had suffered more from the just suspicions of her treachery entertained by others than from any actual hostility that she herself had shown. Had it not been for George II's dual position as King of England and Elector of Hanover, the importance of Prussia's policy would not have been so keenly realized. But as things stood, Prussia was perfectly capable of overawing the other states of Germany, and for purely selfish reasons it was better for George to have Frederick as his friend than as a sullen neighbour who might at any time become an enemy. Furthermore, an alliance between them would have guaranteed Hanover from the rapacity of other powers, as well as from the suspected designs of Prussia herself.

But there was one seemingly insuperable obstacle to an understanding between the sovereigns, and that was their mutual hatred. The most formidable opponent of Carteret's 'system', Frederick had never sought to disguise his contempt for his uncle, and ill feeling between them was constantly

⁴³ Coxe, *History of the House of Austria*, II. 349.

aggravated by rival claims to a duchy or some other triviality of German politics. Then, besides a dispute over damages which Frederick claimed for losses to his merchants during the late war, England was not happy in her choice of envoys sent on successive missions to the Court of Berlin.⁴⁴ In view of all this it is obvious that only by an unlooked-for series of circumstances could the two sovereigns be convinced that it was to their respective interests to become reconciled. When in the course of a tour in Western Germany Frederick passed not far from his uncle's château, it was quite impossible to persuade the English King to arrange an interview; and even Newcastle had the shrewdness to see and deplore the lost opportunity.⁴⁵

In the meantime the Duke of Newcastle showed that his passion for subsidies was by no means appeased or restrained by failure during his brother's lifetime. Persistent in the pursuance of the 'Hanoverian' policy, which Granville had bequeathed,⁴⁶ the Duke first engaged to subsidize the little principality of Hesse, which should place

⁴⁴ Both Legge and Williams had been unfortunate in diplomacy at Berlin. Of course one of the chief grievances against Frederick was his well-known repudiation of obligations relative to the 'Silesian loan'.

⁴⁵ Newcastle to Holderness, June 24, 1755: Add. MSS., 32656, f. 155.

⁴⁶ The policy might be termed 'Austro-Hanoverian' until the Austrian feature broke down at the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. See Ward, *Great Britain and Hanover*, p. 165.

a small army at Hanover's disposal in case of possible invasion. Secondly, he endeavoured without success to inveigle Denmark into adding herself to England's list of debtors.⁴⁷ But far the most difficult of the Duke's diplomatic speculations was undoubtedly his effort to secure the Court of St. Petersburg as a menace to Frederick on his northern frontier. Not from any lack of enmity toward Prussia was the enterprise an arduous one; it was, rather, because the Czarina's advisers saw the hope of augmenting their fortunes from the Newcastle policy. To overcome a strenuous opposition in the Russian Council and satisfy the cupidity of England's chief advocate, the Great Chancellor, was evidently too considerable a task for the talents of the English Ambassador, and the terms proposed by Russia in February were too exorbitant to be considered.⁴⁸ Meanwhile the treaties with Saxony and Bavaria, which had been concluded when no war was imminent, were about to expire at a time when their object might at last be attained;⁴⁹ and since Holland (notwithstanding the efforts of the Princesse Gouvernante, who was George II's daughter) was not only

⁴⁷ Holderness to Robinson, May 25, 1755: Add. MSS., 32855, f. 190. Hardwicke was said to have felt much relieved at the Duke's failure.—Hartington to Newcastle, May 16, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 26.

⁴⁸ Dickens to Newcastle, February 8, 1755: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 392.

⁴⁹ Waldegrave mentions this curious situation when he attacks the Ministry's foreign policy.—*Memoirs*, p. 42.

loth to contribute a share of these subsidies but in all ways indifferent to her ancient alliance, the Duke of Newcastle could actually rely on no important power in Europe save the amicably neutral Court of Madrid.

In March, while a letter from Keith might have tempted the Ministers to be really sanguine that Austria would come into their terms,⁵⁰ another written by Yorke the same day from The Hague attested to an impending rupture in some belated negotiations over the Barrier question.⁵¹ The problem lay unsettled, and April had partly elapsed, when at last the Court of Vienna made a determined effort to seek a solution.⁵² Unhappily, its proposal revealed the same unending difficulty. The Empress was ever dominated by suspicion of Prussia, and if she were expected to protect

⁵⁰ Keith to Newcastle, March 4, 1755: Add. MSS., 32853, f. 82.

⁵¹ Yorke to Newcastle, March 4, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 97.

⁵² Vice-Chancellor Colloredo, on behalf of the Emperor Francis, expressed the willingness of his court to furnish 50,000 troops for the defence of the Low Countries on condition that Russia should raise 50,000, the German princes 30,000, and the English Government 10,000, besides subsidizing Russia, Bavaria, Saxony and Hesse. The Emperor's fear of Prussia may be clearly read in these demands; and yet they can hardly be called exorbitant, if we consider that the Maritime powers were much more concerned than Austria in any question of maintaining the integrity of the Low Countries. Colloredo added wisely that he looked for a general war, unless the rupture with his court was soon healed. Communication of Colloredo to Newcastle, and plan (dated April 16): Add. MSS., 32854, f. 145, 150.

Hanover from Prussian invasion, her own possessions must be accorded a like guarantee ; ⁵³ and so, above all things, an alliance with Russia must be managed.

On the 18th the inner circle of the Cabinet—of which Fox was not a member—held a meeting ⁵⁴ and, while declining to make definite promises, once more called upon the Court of Vienna to send immediate assistance for the defence of the Low Countries. This was only reviving the most delicate of the points at issue. The Empress, through fear and distrust of Prussia, was unwilling thus to draw strength from the heart of her dominions ; while both Holland and Austria (equally desirous of averting war from the Continent) felt that England, whose difficulties with France were the real cause of danger to the Low Countries, should accordingly be expected to bear the principal burden of their defence. But this would be too much for Newcastle's credit in Parliament. Hence the endeavours of England to coerce her allies.

On the 19th Holderness sent word to the First Lord that he understood that Austria would be content with but a third of the demands she had proposed ; ⁵⁵ and the *contre-projet* of England—dictated soon afterwards from Hanover—was cer-

⁵³ Not only were subsidies to German princes demanded, but also a guarantee for the Empress's hereditary possessions.

⁵⁴ Minute of Meeting, April 18, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32995, f. 79.

⁵⁵ Holderness to Newcastle, April 19, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32854, f. 182.

tainly composed in that spirit. Unluckily for England, the Empress was wholly misunderstood, and she flatly refused to send an army to Flanders until the treaty with Russia was concluded.⁵⁶ In an ultimatum of the following June the whole position of Austria was clearly defined,⁵⁷ but by that time all reasonable hope of accommodation was at an end.

Meanwhile 'Royalty was trembling for his Hanover', and despite the imminent outbreak of hostilities with France, the King determined to seek his native hearth and effect what he could in the way of paper promise of succour. The Ministers would fain have detained him, nominally because the King would be in danger if a continent so combustible should be lighted into war, but more particularly, perhaps, because they dreaded the appointment, as Regent, of the Duke of Cumberland, who might circumvent their policy and precipitate a war the conduct of which would devolve upon them.⁵⁸ In some things, however, George II would not be crossed, and the Ministers had to yield.

Not so every one, however. A certain Lord Poulett notified the Peers that he would move an address in protest against the King's plan to leave the country. It would be hard to say whether

⁵⁶ Holdernessee to Newcastle, May 28, 1755: Add. MSS., 32855, f. 236.

⁵⁷ See Waddington, *Louis XV et le Renversement des Alliances* pp. 137-9.

⁵⁸ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 383.

amusement or consternation was the chief emotion of his audience, but had the noble lord displayed as much courage as he won notoriety, the pusillanimous Ministers might perhaps have taken him seriously. The intended mover may or may not have been actuated by the rejection of his application for the Stole in December⁵⁹; and no doubt the act was disrespectful and unprecedented; but it certainly can be asserted with some justice that the King had shown a marked lack of regard for his realm when he vetoed the wishes of the Cabinet, and his Parliament had a right to tell him so.

Poulett seems to have been intimate with Fox,⁶⁰ whom he told of the dire invectives he had in store for His Majesty, and Hardwicke thought the Secretary-at-War should inform the King of the details of his coming humiliation.⁶¹ But Fox had a better way of serving his Sovereign. When the appointed day arrived, Poulett kept the Lords waiting a full half-hour while he whispered mysteriously to some of his colleagues, until he finally declared that he 'had nothing to trouble them with'.⁶² Fox had evidently persuaded him to abandon his intention, and wrote to Newcastle the

⁵⁹ Newcastle to Poulett, January 2, 1755: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 39.

⁶⁰ Poulett was probably one of Fox's numerous dependents.

⁶¹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, April 12, 1755: Add. MSS., 32854, f. 99.

⁶² Rigby to Bedford, April 17, 1755: *Bedford Corres.* II. 160.

same day that the 'measure was at an end'.⁶³ The Earl meanwhile, deeply regretting his impetuosity, wrote to Fox and Lady Yarmouth entreating them to present his apologies to the King.⁶⁴

But, perhaps tormented for his cowardice, or hopeless of receding with dignity, Poulett presently changed his mind,⁶⁵ and the motion was actually made a few days before the King's departure. It is needless to add that he won no support from his hearers, and Chesterfield, after censuring the impropriety, moved and carried an adjournment.⁶⁶ Thus ended Lord Poulett's career in history.

Two days later Parliament was prorogued. It had been, since the beginning of the winter holidays, a comparatively uneventful session; and Newcastle had cause to look back upon it with considerable satisfaction, in that the precious anxieties of his diplomatic soul had suffered no unpleasant digression. Chesterfield had observed to a friend that Fox had 'evidently the lead there',⁶⁷ and it was quite true that the latter had practically been Leader in all but name. Still the

⁶³ Fox to Newcastle, April 17, 1755: Add. MSS., 32854, f. 137. It was obviously against the interest of Fox and his party to prevent the King's departure.

⁶⁴ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 384.

⁶⁵ Fox wrote the information to Halifax, who communicated it to Newcastle.—Halifax to Newcastle, April 19, 1755: Add. MSS., 32854, f. 192.

⁶⁶ Walpole to Bentley, May 6, 1755: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 304.

⁶⁷ Chesterfield to Dayrolles, February 4, 1755: *Correspondence of Chesterfield*, III. 1119.

exercise of his fidelity had not been overtaxed, and Pitt had not forced him into unpleasant problems of discrimination.

The dispute over the provisions for a regency will claim our attention later. The councillors who usually met were Cumberland, Granville and, less frequently, Fox, Anson, Robinson, Newcastle and Hardwicke. Grave doubts were entertained as to whether the first three would co-operate with the others,⁶⁸ for Fox was becoming intimate with Granville, and the triumph of that element in the past autumn was not forgotten. But this was the least of His Majesty's cares, and on the 28th the King took his departure for Hanover, accompanied by Secretary Holdernessee and, as usual, Lady Yarmouth.

The Sovereign, having arrived in his beloved Electorate, turned every thought to its defence in event of future war, while Holdernessee, calculated by nature to become the slave of any one who pointed the way, energetically seconded his master by scattering despatches broadcast and receiving envoys of petty principalities. In June the Hessians were definitely secured by treaty, and the Elector of Hanover was evidently meditating an impenetrable hedge of buffer states, of which Bavaria should become one and Saxony another.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Harris, III. 23.

⁶⁹ Austria was, of course, nominally included in any contemplated system. Mr. Ward points out—what indeed seems quite obvious—that the chief flaw in any such design would

Even the Duke of Brunswick was eagerly courted, though his dominions were not great and his sympathies were likely to be Prussian.⁷⁰

For a time the treaty-makers at home, upholders of the same policy, on a greater scale, with a greater exchequer, were content to let the King amuse himself ; but when at last it became obvious that the electoral funds were insufficient to appease the ancient greed of German potentates, and that help was therefore expected from His Majesty's kingdom, the Duke of Newcastle began to fear for his prospects in Parliament.⁷¹ The ' plan ' submitted by Holdernessee would cost—according to the Duke's estimate—nearly two million pounds,⁷² and the Chancellor considered such extravagance unjustifiable.⁷³ Cumberland, for his part, was opposed to any continental ' plan ' and declared a war in Europe during that year impracticable.⁷⁴

Nevertheless letters continued to besiege the Ministry with requests for assistance, and when finally the First Lord's remonstrance only met with

be the sundry and varied objects pursued by the different allies concerned. *Great Britain and Hanover*, p. 147.

⁷⁰ Charles, Duke of Brunswicke-Wolfenbüttel, had married the sister of Frederick the Great.

⁷¹ Newcastle to Holdernessee, ' *entre-nous* ', July 11, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32857, f. 180.

⁷² Newcastle to Holdernessee, July 18, 1755 : *ibid.*, f. 159. Excluding ' *extraordinaries* ' he estimated the expense as £1,400,000.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 13, 1755 : *ibid.* 82.

⁷³ Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 14, 1755 : *ibid.*, f. 91.

⁷⁴ Newcastle to Holdernessee, July 18, 1755 (second letter) : *ibid.*, f. 182.

fresh demands,⁷⁵ the latter decided that his royal master must be silenced forthwith. An important meeting of the inner clique was held on the 30th of July to discuss the King's appeal, and reply was sent immediately to Holderness that 'all proper assistance should be given for the defence of His Majesty's dominions if now attacked, which assistance should be confined singly to that act'; but 'any subsidiary treaties to be made for this purpose should be entered into by the King as *Electors*'; although (they wrote) he might guarantee his assistance as King, if the princes in question should be attacked on his account. As for the expense entailed, His Majesty should submit an estimate to the Council and they would do what they could in the way of obtaining assistance from Parliament.⁷⁶

The minute, most evidently inspired by the Duke of Newcastle, showed a marked fear of exciting the nation by another system of subsidies, and there was also perhaps an underlying dread of the Cumberlands, whose policy was to limit the war strictly to the colonies and the sea. Cumberland himself had been conspicuously absent from the meeting,⁷⁷ although it had been decided to

⁷⁵ Holderness to Newcastle, July 23, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 308.

⁷⁶ Minute to be laid before the King. July 30, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 489.

⁷⁷ Cumberland's absence is certainly to be regarded as strange. Possibly he purposely kept out of all discussions of German affairs, in order—by allowing the Duke a monopoly in this one department of policy—to give his opponents a

admit Granville; and it was he, the First Lord assured Holdernessee, who had insisted upon the insertion urging the King's return.⁷⁸ The old statesman was fully aware that neither military power nor diplomacy could exert a free hand while the Sovereign of England was encircled by continental powers.

While the Duke of Newcastle's mind was the scene of an anxious struggle between, on the one hand, a desire to render Hanover safe, and make himself and his Government play a great rôle on the Continent, and, on the other, a fear of the consequences at home when no Pelham lived to protect him against the possible hostility of Parliament, a far more pressing problem demanded the attention of the many-sided Ministry. To France, more than to any other power, the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had proved of little more value than an armistice. Difficulties—especially in America—which were consequent on the vagueness of the Treaty of Utrecht, had multiplied in the years that followed that settlement; yet little disposition had been shown to study the situation in its essentials, and the French and English colonists were forced into the habit of thinking and acting for themselves. The neglect had been due at first to the lethargy which a long

certain interest in letting him have a free rein in the problem of dealing with France and the outbreak of naval hostilities.

⁷⁸ Newcastle to Holdernessee ('*entre nous*') August 1, 1755: Add MSS., 32857, f. 506.

period of peace had infused, and later (so far as England was concerned) to the haphazard policy of the Pelham Administration in foreign affairs. When a man really did appear in the English Ministry who realized the importance of the American problem,⁷⁹ he found such a total lack of sympathy with his plans, that we can hardly deem it strange that the Treaty in 1748 should have left the boundaries more than ever in dispute; and meanwhile the situation had been so aggravated by neglect that a permanent and definitive settlement must appear to us wellnigh impossible. Hence the abortive industry of a boundary commission, and hence the utter divergence in the views which the two courts entertained of their rights.

The Cumberland Party, as we have seen, had gained in influence by espousing a policy of action. They made no pretence of their ability to arrange matters by diplomacy, and they are rightly suspected of aiming at a settlement by force. Perhaps they regarded war as inevitable; at all events they harboured no scruples against endangering the peace, and the triumph of the party in October 1754 has already been described. If ambassadors could not, or would not, adjust the difficulties, vigorous action—even at that late date—was hardly more to be reprehended than sheer neglect. But the policy of arming in time of peace was

⁷⁹ The Duke of Bedford's scheme for the expulsion of the French from Canada during the late war has already been mentioned.

a dangerous one—especially when blood had been already shed in the forests of Pennsylvania—and time was to show that one step led only too easily to another, until retrocession with dignity was impossible.

Meanwhile the Government of Louis XV preserved an indolence and irresolution that no amount of danger seemed likely to shake. No ulcer like the Cumberland Party in England needed probing for the sake of peace ; and the France of 1754 was not the France of Louis XIV, or even of the Regent Orléans. If indeed the Court of Versailles shared the iniquitous ignorance of their rivals across the Channel, it was equally true that they had not the means for giving blow for blow ⁸⁰ if England should suddenly choose to support her colonists or precipitate a war. The French successes in India had been due rather to the cleverness of her agents sent thither than to the efficiency of the military strength expended, and English neglect, and that alone, had saved France serious losses in America. Her fleets, once the glorious defenders of the Mediterranean, had dwindled to a few helpless squadrons, while acute financial depression made a thorough renovation impossible. Moreover, in a case where a strong navy was the only feasible remedy, the French had to face the inevitable results of their ill-conceived

⁸⁰ France, for example, had only 45 men-of-war to cope with England's 89.—Lacour-Gayet, *La Marine militaire de la France sous Louis XV*, p. 243.

policy of making the maritime strength wholly subordinate to, and dependent upon the army.⁸¹ For these reasons the Court of Versailles had overlooked many causes for provocation, and the Duc de Mirepoix, the ambassador to London, was thoroughly imbued with the desire of maintaining peace at any cost.

The attitude of the English Ministry is somewhat difficult to define. The British Ambassador at Paris, the Earl of Albemarle, was a dissolute and reputedly incompetent man; but he enjoyed great popularity at the French Court, and his sudden death, in December 1754, was deeply regretted. If he is open to criticism for not doing more to reconcile the two countries, it would nevertheless be more just to blame the half-hearted efforts of his superiors at home—men who, as Mirepoix declared, were *dans la disposition de ne considérer que les convenances*.⁸² Cumberland was, of course, unshaken in his determination to provoke a war, while Fox, who was equally outspoken in his hostility to the Court of Versailles, was probably responsible for an order sent to the Admiralty, January 20, to equip seventeen ships of the line ‘without loss of time’.⁸³ But in Robinson we find

⁸¹ Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 288.

⁸² Waddington, *Louis XV et le Renversement des Alliances*, p. 75.

⁸³ Robinson to the Lords of the Admiralty, January 20, 1755, Adm. sec., *in-letters*, 4120, Pub. Rec. Off. M. Waddington credits Fox with having signed the order, but I confess I have been unable to find any despatch except the above.

little more than the subservience expected of him ; while the correspondence of his mentor, the Duke of Newcastle, forces one to believe that he had neither settled convictions nor a definite policy. It was consequently not difficult for the more positive views of Fox and Granville to gain ground.

The first meeting of the Cabinet to discuss these delicate questions took place apparently on January 21,⁸⁴ although our only hint of its proceedings is Mirepoix's information that Fox assumed an attitude of hostility to Newcastle. Whatever may have been the exact policy Fox was seeking to enforce, the Secretary-at-War was certainly regarded by Mirepoix both as the leading advocate of a strong and active navy and as the most inveterate enemy of France in the English Cabinet. Pursuant to these convictions, the French Ambassador tried to impress Newcastle with the danger of having so violent an associate ; and contended that much trouble might be averted by securing the dismissal of the man France most distrusted. For obvious reasons Newcastle was far from agreeing to such an idea ;⁸⁵ while Mirepoix, in no wise reassured when Fox assumed a more pacific attitude, placed all his hopes in Granville as the balance-wheel of the Cabinet.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ We find the arrangements for the meeting in a letter from Newcastle to Holderness, dated January 19, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32852, f. 188.

⁸⁵ Mirepoix to Rouillé, January 23, 1755 : *Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Angleterre*, t. 438, f. 35.

⁸⁶ Mirepoix to Rouillé, January 30, 1755 : *ibid.*, f. 70.

Meanwhile, Mirepoix having (at his own request) received full powers to treat, a very select gathering—consisting only of Newcastle and his three principal supporters—met on February 7, and empowered Robinson to enter into negotiations with him, the Secretary being instructed to propose the immediate evacuation of the districts upon the Ohio and the demolition of all forts and settlements therein.⁸⁷ Such might well have constituted an excellent basis for a complete settlement, for Mirepoix had already been authorized to propose an armistice of two years (that disputes might be investigated),⁸⁸ and Newcastle was prepared to accept this in principle.⁸⁹ But unfortunately the French Ambassador was hampered by his compulsion to refer all matters to Rouillé, his superior; and the English Cabinet, gradually becoming dominated by Cumberland counsels, was quick to assume an attitude of uncompromising obduracy. Dreading, perhaps, the import of this limited gathering of the friends of peace, Cumberland himself wrote to Newcastle on the 11th, urgently

⁸⁷ Minute of meeting, Newcastle House, February 7, 1755; present: Newcastle, Hardwicke, Holderness, and Robinson: Add. MSS., 32996, f. 25.

⁸⁸ Rouillé to Mirepoix, February 3, 1755, Waddington, p. 76.

⁸⁹ Newcastle does not specify the length of time he would be willing to consider, apparently leaving the matter to be determined at a meeting of the *Conciliabulum*. 'That there should be a suspension of arms for (blank) months' is the way he expresses himself.—Memorandum, Powis House, February 9, 1755: Add. MSS., 32996, f. 27.

begging him 'not to neglect the little time that is left for preparation', 'as no natural enemy ought to be trusted.'⁹⁰ Possibly this moved the First Lord to repent his conciliatory attitude; for another meeting was held on the 20th—this time Granville was present—and the result was a precise and rather sweeping elaboration of England's claims in America, designed to form the basis of the present negotiation.⁹¹

One is certainly at a loss to find any intelligible policy on the part of Newcastle. The only point which seems clear is that in his heart he wanted peace, and—in January at least—had believed that hostilities would be averted.⁹² Whether he cherished the fear that to wage a great war successfully would be beyond his administrative powers is difficult to conjecture. But having, apparently, no settled convictions, he fell an easy prey to the full tide of Cumberland determination. One party knew perfectly what it wanted, and the more the First Lord vacillated, the more surely the Cumberlands gained ground. In vain Mirepoix pleaded the programme which the lethargy of his court dictated; Fox and Cumberland had not sent Braddock to America for the purpose of preventing a rupture, and the Government now insisted upon

⁹⁰ Cumberland to Newcastle, February 11, 1755: Add. MSS., 32852, f. 420.

⁹¹ Minute of meeting, Whitehall, February 20, 1755: Add. MSS., 32996, f. 34.

⁹² Newcastle to Keene, January 27, 1755: Add. MSS., 32853, f. 277.

an immediate and definitive settlement. Unhappily they scorned to make concessions, and peace without concessions was hopeless. And so, when Mirepoix brought forward, in addition to the plan of an armistice, a proposal very similar to that which had been concerted in the meeting of February 7th,⁹³ the Cabinet replied by a *contre-projet*, March 7, which would have taken away territory long occupied by the French, practically driven their lines back to the Wabash and St. Lawrence and endangered their communications with the islands of St. John and Cape Breton.⁹⁴ No concession worth mentioning was offered in return, and Mirepoix, hitherto inclined to be sanguine, could readily divine that such a verdict would never be accepted by his court.

It is an evidence of the irony of history that great events often turn on a momentary delay. Encouraged by an assurance of Newcastle—probably behind the backs of his colleagues—that the *contre-projet* was not an ultimatum,⁹⁵ Mirepoix held

⁹³ A synopsis of the French proposals is given in Waddington, p. 79. The evacuation of the Ohio country and the destruction of the several forts under discussion would have meant reciprocal concession, while the addition of an armistice of two years might be regarded as necessary for the success of the measure.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80. These proposals did not materially differ from the resolutions of February 20, except in their proposed determination of the territory assigned to the five nations and the consequent restriction of the French to the land north of the St. Lawrence.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

several conferences with Robinson, and so far succeeded in whittling down the English demands as to gain for the moment a great diplomatic victory.⁹⁶ In a letter which scarcely shows that he really grasped the situation, Robinson endeavoured to assure Newcastle that he had done his best in the way of a compromise, and the treaty was to be 'definitive'—which he seemed to regard as his particular title to commendation.⁹⁷ But unfortunately no compromise, however prudent, could be signed by the Ambassador without the authorization of his court; and the pacific intriguing of Newcastle and Robinson was very soon discountenanced at a meeting of the Cabinet. If Mirepoix is correct—and there is reason to believe him—it was Granville whose clever manœuvres forced adjournment of the question.⁹⁸ When word arrived from Rouillé, as irresolute as usual, the Cabinet felt no longer any compulsion to wear the mask. At a meeting on April 3 the 'inner clique' reverted

⁹⁶ For the terms of the arrangements see *ibid.*, pp. 84–5; cf. Sir Thomas Robinson's *Three Points of Accommodation*, dated March 26, 1755: Add. MSS., 32996, f. 61.

⁹⁷ Robinson to Newcastle, March 22, 1755: Add. MSS., 32853, f. 437.

⁹⁸ It appears that when the Cabinet seemed inclined to commit themselves to an acceptance of Mirepoix's compromise proposals, Granville suggested that they ought not to proceed to anything new until the official reply to the *contre-projet* had been received. It was a clever appeal to Newcastle's love of the punctilious, and it succeeded.—Mirepoix to Rouillé, March 28, 1755, *Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Angleterre*, t. 438, f. 339.

definitely to the position which it had taken when it shaped the *contre-projet*.⁹⁹ Thus ended—in-
gloriously—the Mirepoix-Robinson compromise;
and thus perished the last chance of a peaceful
settlement between the two countries.

Of the part which Fox played in shaping the
course of events there is little evidence as yet on
record. Neither he nor Cumberland had a vote
in the inner councils, and the work of a political
intriguer is seldom visible to the historian. But
whatever his actual influence, the Cabinet's policy
was his; and if we may now imagine that
the scene has suddenly shifted from the Cabinet
to the Commons—the ministerial design was very
soon to cast its shadow. Before Mirepoix had
received the dilatory response of his senseless
court—in fact only three days after Robinson
announced his work—the King addressed Parlia-
ment in a spirit very different from that of the
hopeful little compromise. After assuring the
Houses (March 25) of the vigorous support which
would be given British pretensions in America, he
was rewarded the following day by a vote of a
million on credit—a measure which we are told
had been concerted with Fox's approval.¹⁰⁰ Even
Bedford played a rôle in the triumph of his

⁹⁹ Minute of meeting, April 3, 1755: Add. MSS., 32996, f. 69. The Cabinet took the occasion to express its dissatisfaction with the extract from Rouillé's letter of March 27, which Mirepoix had communicated to it.

¹⁰⁰ West to Newcastle, March 22, 1754: Add. MSS., 32853, f. 439.

party, when he bitterly assailed the 'inadvertency of the Ministers'.¹⁰¹

Mirepoix had made the deduction—even before his 'affair' with Robinson—that Newcastle's power was waning and a revolution in politics was imminent.¹⁰² It was Granville (so he reported in April), who had now the complete ascendancy; and Granville, he continued to feel, was the truest friend of peace.¹⁰³ Indeed it should rank among the Lord President's greatest triumphs in diplomacy that he was able so long to delude the Ambassador with enigmatical assurances.¹⁰⁴ Not, in fact, until the official notification was handed him, announcing the English Government's adhesion to the *contre-projet*, did the Frenchman begin to realize how thoroughly the old statesman had duped him.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 382. Mirepoix mentions Fox, Bedford and Sandwich among the men responsible for rousing the war-spirit of the nation.—Mirepoix to Rouillé, April 25, 1755.

¹⁰² Mirepoix to Rouillé, March 10, 1755: *Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Angleterre*, t. 438, f. 270.

¹⁰³ Mirepoix to Rouillé, April 6, 1755: *Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Angleterre*, t. 438, f. 362.

¹⁰⁴ Mirepoix seemed much in the dark as to Granville's meaning when the latter told him that some things could be done tacitly though not agreed upon openly. At another audience the Lord President assured him that England would not begin any hostilities. Whatever his grasp—or lack of it—Mirepoix regarded such remarks as a 'half-overture of accommodation'.—Mirepoix to Rouillé, April 10, 1755: *Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Angleterre*, t. 438, f. 383.

¹⁰⁵ Mirepoix then held Granville responsible not only for this notification (in which suspicion he was probably correct) but

But if Mirepoix was disillusioned, he was not the only victim ; for the power-loving Newcastle was foundering in the current. When a meeting of the older statesmen was held to discuss the regency question, the redoubtable Duke of Devonshire insisted that Cumberland should be made 'sole regent'. Newcastle, who saw the danger, was said to be distracted. To exclude so great a personage was virtually impossible ; yet how could he allow himself a partner in the leadership ? In the end, despite Devonshire's protests, he succeeded in forcing a compromise : His Royal Highness to be the leading member of a council of regency, that is, the Cabinet *ex officio*.¹⁰⁶ But Cumberland's very admission was a staggering blow to the peace, and Mirepoix was justified now in urging his own recall.¹⁰⁷

We can hardly doubt that France, had she possessed any other ruler, would have deliberately

even for having instigated the King's trip to Hanover and the Duke of Cumberland's appointment to the headship of the Regency. Granville's object, Mirepoix decided, was to take affairs completely out of the hands of Newcastle. As for his Lordship's pretences of desiring peace, the Ambassador was wholly unable to understand them or penetrate his purpose.—Mirepoix to Rouillé, May 1, 1755 : *Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Angleterre*, t. 439, f. 64.

¹⁰⁶ Authorities for this episode : Doddington, *Diary*, May 27, 1755 ; Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 35 ; Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 384.

¹⁰⁷ Mirepoix mentioned particularly the fact that Lord Hertford, who had been designated to succeed Albemarle, did not dream of departing to his new post.—Waddington, p. 93.

unmasked her enemy, and been ready to accept the challenge. But the Government of Louis XV appeared to want peace at any price ; and so the negotiations were continued, even when failure was inevitable. There is little doubt that the English Cabinet—whatever the motives of individuals—was now resolved upon war. Newcastle, never persistently staunch to a losing cause, had soon found himself borne along by the tide ; and Granville, as we have seen, had held the keys to the situation. We can readily gauge the full extent of the latter's studied duplicity when we now consider the plot which had long been operating against the peace. Long before the course of diplomacy had reached the phrase of ultimata—in fact, while Mirepoix and Robinson were still working hard upon their compromise—the inner circle of the Cabinet met to frame a startling policy. It was resolved at two small meetings¹⁰⁸—on March 18 and 24—that measures should be taken to intercept any French fleet which should be bound for North America for the purpose of landing troops. The resolution was confirmed by a full Cabinet on April 10, and the command of the expedition was assigned to Admiral Boscawen.

The extraordinary scheme may or may not have emanated from the brain of Granville. The design has been attributed to the Cumberlands on the ground that they believed a war should be

¹⁰⁸ The minutes of these meetings are given in full in Corbett, *England in the Seven Years' War*, I. 364.

precipitated in the summer, when by reason of the fishing industry the fleets of France were weak in men.¹⁰⁹ But such a policy meant the beginning of a new phase in the struggle; for hitherto expeditions had been sent for no other purpose (at least nominally) than that of defence.¹¹⁰ It was, in fact, as though France had endeavoured to stop Braddock while yet on the high seas.

But this was not the only peculiar feature of the plot. When Mirepoix's suspicions were aroused by a rumour that such a policy was intended, Newcastle, Robinson and Granville united in assuring him that they were entirely unfounded.¹¹¹ It was Cromwell's *coup* of 1655,

¹⁰⁹ Von Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, I. 364.

¹¹⁰ It has sometimes been urged by apologists of the Boscawen affair that to have endeavoured to wrest from the enemy the means of organizing hostilities was virtually an act of defence. However this argument may be regarded—and the writer himself feels that the integrity of international relations would be hard to preserve under such conditions—it certainly has no place in the letters of Newcastle. On July 1, for example, we find him writing: 'We had confined all our *offensive* measures to America.'—Add. MSS., 32856, f. 433. Clearly the standpoint of the British Cabinet was entirely one of expediency. They thought that by striking a severe blow under cover of the ensuing negotiations, so distinct an advantage would be given them that France would feel helpless to defend her possessions in America. Great Britain would then be in a position to dictate terms.

¹¹¹ Waddington, p. 97; Memorandum, dated July 30, 1755: Add. MSS., 33020, f. 374. A further touch of realism is added to the affair by the fact that the Ministers practised some of their deception while dining with Mirepoix as the latter's guests.

decked in the polished cynicism of the eighteenth century.

Once the step was taken, the Cabinet never faltered. On the 17th the smaller body met again to raise the number of Boscawen's ships from seven to ten ;¹¹² and on the 23rd orders were sent Admiral Hawke to 'use great despatch' in getting another squadron in readiness for action.¹¹³ Four days later Boscawen sailed away on his momentous voyage ; and the next day commenced—with the King's departure for Hanover—the régime of the Council of Regency. From now on the Duke of Cumberland was the active leader of the War Party.

Hitherto we may suppose that Fox and Granville had been the principal champions of action. But now the leader of the party, assisted by Marlborough and the two just mentioned, had every chance of overriding the more peaceable members of the board. In the meantime the settled programme was vigorously enforced. Three days after the French fleet sailed unsuspectingly from Brest the Council took the resolution of sending more vessels to reinforce Boscawen.¹¹⁴ About a fortnight later intelligence arrived that the latter

¹¹² Not including one frigate also added.—Minute of meeting, Newcastle House, April 17, 1755: Add. MSS., 32996, f. 77.

¹¹³ The Admiralty to Hawke, April 23, 1755: Adm. sec., *out-letters*, Pub. Rec. Off.

¹¹⁴ Admiral Holburne was sent with six ships of the line and one frigate.—Minute of meeting, Newcastle House, May 8, 1755: Add. MSS., 32996, f. 97.

had been outmanœuvred and defeated ; ¹¹⁵ but as the report was unconfirmed, the Council continued to put their trust in diplomacy and a capable admiral.

That Newcastle felt any qualms of conscience in letting himself be made the pawn of the War Party in this double game is certainly not evident from his letters. But the possible effect of the inevitable awakening upon the different courts of Europe was naturally bound to disquiet a Minister who realized that England was without an effective ally. Thus, when Mirepoix, discouraged by Cumberland's elevation, prophesied a general war as certain, ¹¹⁶ the Duke was not a little frightened by a threat which served to confirm the prediction of Kaunitz, communicated from Vienna. ¹¹⁷ Indeed the fact that England was wholly unprepared for such an emergency gives us ample cause to reflect both on the reckless obstinacy of the War Party and on the vacillating temper ¹¹⁸ of the man who

¹¹⁵ Secret intelligence from Paris, May 17, 1755: Add. MSS., 32855, f. 302.

¹¹⁶ Newcastle to Keene, April 28, 1755: Add. MSS., 32854, f. 304.

¹¹⁷ Keith to Holderness, March 24, 1755: Add. MSS., 32853, f. 466.

¹¹⁸ It is interesting, in view of Newcastle's attitude at this time, to read some sentiments he expressed during the following autumn. 'The notion,' he writes, 'of obliging France to confine the war to the sea and to America I always thought difficult if not impracticable, and might, as it certainly will, prove dangerous to the country at last, by forcing them in a manner to give their whole attention to their marines, which

best knew the situation on the Continent. What it all might lead to no one of the Council could guess. In their own minds they had solved the question of whether the struggle in America could be kept distinct from the affairs of Europe. It only remained to be seen whether any such rigid limitation were possible.

To Fox, who looked forward to a powerful navy, and was characteristically heedless of methods and consequences, any question of strategy must only have appeared tedious. But the Newcastles must reason—if only in trifles ; and the question which now taxed the intelligence of the Council was what to do with Hawke and his squadron of seventeen vessels. Here at Spithead was the force which the Council considered potentially the gravest danger to the peace.

Newcastle was as usual in an agony of dilemma. Some instructions must be determined if Hawke were to be sent out, but what should he do in the event of his meeting the French ? If an attack should be made in home waters without previous declaration of war, and while a negotiation was still pending, the charge of a ‘breach of faith’ would certainly be made against England, and a general war might ensue, which would find the Government unprepared. Yet, on the other hand, Boscawen’s orders were of such a nature as would

they actually do ; and are, or I am afraid very soon will be, superior to us at sea.’—Newcastle to Lyttelton, November 1, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32860, f. 273.

in themselves bring on a war—a view which, we might remark, would have been wiser had it been held earlier. Then came the strange idea that if the French merchant-fleet returning from the West Indies should be intercepted and captured, ‘they would strike such a blow at first upon their trade as would make the whole kingdom of France cry out against war.’¹¹⁹ All this was submitted to the Chancellor for criticism.

Hardwicke thought at first of consulting Devonshire on the perplexing problem, but the latter having conveyed the suspicion that he was averse to giving an endorsement of a programme already determined, the Chancellor deemed it wiser to talk with Anson than with one of the Cumberlands.¹²⁰ In the opinion of the First Lord of the Admiralty, Hawke’s instructions might be ‘innocent and infer no mischief’. Such a view, of course, made no provision against emergencies; but the Chancellor could now excuse himself from expressing any definite opinion. Fortunately Anson told him the fleet would not be ready to sail for a fortnight;

¹¹⁹ It further occurred to the Duke that the nation would demand some return for the outlay in equipping the fleet. Plainly his mind was divided between the fear of public sentiment on the one hand, and dread of the Government’s policy on the other, while no less clearly was betrayed his anxiety on what Granville might say and do on the whole proposition.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 8, 1755: Add. MSS., 32855, f. 442.

¹²⁰ Newcastle had asked the Chancellor to consult Robinson, Grafton, Devonshire and Anson, but the first two proved to be out of town.—*Ibid.*

and this further inducement to procrastinate was all that Hardwicke needed.¹²¹

A meeting of the Council was held on June 9 in Cumberland's apartments, and Anson, who had agreed that something must be done, carried the proposal that the ships should sail 'to exercise their men'. Meanwhile further delay was possible from the plea of submitting all resolutions to Hanover, and Newcastle eagerly sheltered himself under the knowledge that the King had always the last word.¹²² On the 28th the message arrived that His Majesty accepted Anson's proposal;¹²³ but the number of questions he put to the Council¹²⁴ seems to show that he felt somewhat mystified in these matters, and the Secretary-at-War went so far as to allege that Newcastle himself framed the message.¹²⁵

Meanwhile Cumberland had called another meet-

¹²¹ Hardwicke's reply to the First Lord was worded with much care, and avoided giving any advice on the subject. It would hardly do, he said, for the fleet to remain at Spithead all summer, which 'will amount to a resolution to do nothing at all'. Yet there would also be objections if it went out and likewise did nothing—though unforeseen events might be alleged as an excuse.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, June 8, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 442.

¹²² Newcastle to Holderness, June 13, 1755, and to Hardwicke, June 28, 1755: Add. MSS., 32855, f. 479; 32856, f. 329.

¹²³ Holderness to Newcastle, June 22, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 93.

¹²⁴ Holderness to Robinson, June 22, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 99.

¹²⁵ Doddington, *Diary*, July 21, 1755. False as was the assertion, it shows plainly the distrust and contempt with which the War Party regarded the First Lord.

ing, and Newcastle, who arranged to meet Hardwicke beforehand, was plainly in dread of its import.¹²⁶ His terrors were justified. At a meeting of the leading councillors on the evening of the 29th His Royal Highness was 'absolutely for declaring that Hawke should have hostile orders', and was also 'much set upon breaking the negotiations'. The erratic Lord President observed that enough had been done already; while Hardwicke characteristically advised that 'all should be left open for future deliberation'. But the violence of Cumberland was not to be overborne, and in the end the Council decided as he wished.¹²⁷ To transmit the proposals to Hanover was the duty of Newcastle himself; 'you see the dilemma I am in,' he declared, 'the *D.* certainly wishes nothing but war.'¹²⁸

But the triumph of the War Party was scarcely more than momentary; for Newcastle had the minute, and he altered it judiciously.¹²⁹ The full

¹²⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 28, 1755.

¹²⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 30, 1755: Add. MSS., 32856, f. 394.

¹²⁸ Newcastle to Holderness, July 2, 1755: *ibid.*, 446.

¹²⁹ Newcastle suggested to Hardwicke the advisability of inserting '*it may be necessary*' to prefix the resolution regarding Hawke (*ibid.*, f. 394); but in the minute of the meeting, which, though evidently revised, bore the date June 29, it was suggested that, should the French reply prove unsatisfactory, the negotiation should be regarded as severed, and 'if the negotiation should be absolutely broke off . . ., it may then be advisable that Sir Edward Hawke should in such case sail with the fleet now at Spithead, or a sufficient part thereof, and

Council met July 1; and the Cumberlands' only resource was a move in self-defence.¹³⁰ In the minute despatched to the King the Council freely admitted that the nature of Hawke's instructions should depend upon future circumstances, but if the next communication from France should not prove satisfactory, they wished to know if the King would allow them to sever the negotiation; and finally, as the orders to Hawke must largely depend upon this question, they earnestly desired His Majesty would be pleased to accord them full powers.¹³¹ It is regrettable that the Council had not made this request before—which might have prevented much delay. But shifting responsibility was the Newcastle's favourite refuge; and even when discretionary powers had arrived, the Chancellor expressed his opinion that no action should be taken.¹³²

One may well feel that an abrupt severance of that he should have orders to act hostilely against France'; although the 'nature and extent' of such orders should 'depend upon events'.—Draft of minute, at H.R.H. the Duke's apartments, June 29, 1755: Add. MSS., 35870, f. 247. Thus the Council was once more at a deadlock.

¹³⁰ The War Party felt, in all probability, that all efforts would continue to be useless, if the resolutions of the meeting must always be sent (through Newcastle's hands) to the King for endorsement. If, however, the minute taken at a meeting could be final, they might hope for some definite action.

¹³¹ Minute of meeting, Whitehall, July 1, 1755: Add. MSS., 32996, f. 160.

¹³² The Chancellor advised delay until the next despatches from Vienna should arrive.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, June 14, 1755: Add. MSS., 32856, f. 91.

the negotiations, such as Cumberland had desired, might have materially lessened the coming stigma of Boscawen's intended aggression. At all events Cumberland had not the diplomatic guile of Granville, and much preferred a frank and open attitude of hostility.

But before the Council of Regency had seen the wisdom of ending the negotiations the news reached London, July 14, that Boscawen's blow had fallen.¹³³ The affair had indeed yielded little to compensate for an evident breach of faith—for all but two of the French vessels had escaped under cover of a fog ; but the long suspense was over, and France could see that her rival felt no longer any compulsion to respect the peace. On the 22nd Mirepoix received instructions to depart immediately without taking leave.

The problem of Hawke's instructions should now have been easily solved. Only complete success could justify a policy of aggression, and only by continuing formidable could England sustain her dignity. Yet now, as truly as before, the Newcastles shirked the issue ; and though Hardwicke timidly suggested that Hawke should be sent out,¹³⁴ Robinson, faithful to his chief, tried in vain to persuade the Ambassador that Boscawen's act had been unauthorized.¹³⁵ Such shuffling may

¹³³ Anson to Newcastle, July 14, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 93.

¹³⁴ Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 14, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 91.

¹³⁵ Waddington, p. 104.

well have disgusted Cumberland, who called a meeting on the following day, though—perhaps owing to Granville's absence—no decision whatever was taken.¹³⁶ On the 17th a full Council was held for the express purpose of deciding what action should be taken in virtue of the new powers. It was then that Cumberland, who steadily scouted all danger of provoking a war on the Continent, became involved in an argument with Newcastle on the subject. But as no agreement could be reached, the Council resolved simply to send Hawke to Torbay to await further instructions.¹³⁷

And yet even Newcastle must have seen that sooner or later the question must be faced. However firmly he stuck to the notion that the area of war could be limited, the Cumberland policy of aggression was but claiming its logical results. It was due perhaps in part to this irrefutable fact that he came at last to contemplate a battle nearer home, though he insisted that the object must be worthy of the blow,¹³⁸ and obviously Boscawen's case had taught them all a lesson. Again on the 21st the leaders battled over the problem, and once again the War Party were thwarted by a trick. Cumberland was 'in-

¹³⁶ Newcastle to Granville, July 15, 1755: Add. MSS., 82857, f. 111.

¹³⁷ Newcastle to Holderness, July 18, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 182.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*; Newcastle to Holderness ('*entre nous*'), July 22, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 298.

variably for taking everything of every kind', and urged that they should avail themselves of every opportunity; Granville, on the other hand, would leave all trade unharmed, and 'not (as he expressed it) vex your neighbours for a little muck'; while Newcastle, as usual, was trying to find some 'middle way'.¹³⁹ Doubtless disagreement in the ranks of his opponents had afforded the Duke some comfort, and in the end he yielded to Granville, though not without a struggle. Hawke was thus to be allowed to take any men-of-war but not to attack merchant vessels;¹⁴⁰ and Anson had obliged the War Party by ordering the Admiral to get his fleet in readiness 'with all possible despatch'.¹⁴¹ The Cumberlands had won a victory—though, as will appear, an illusory one.

In the course of a discussion with Fox and Marlborough after the meeting, the First Lord dropped the suggestion that Hawke himself might best decide whether and when to attack the enemy. Fox must have laughed, if it were he who answered, 'Hawke is too wise a man to do anything at all, which others, when done, are to pronounce he ought to be hanged for.'¹⁴²

But little did it profit Fox and Marlborough

¹³⁹ Quoted from a letter of Newcastle to Holderness, July 18, 1755; Doddington, *Diary*, July 21, 1755.

¹⁴⁰ Newcastle to Holderness ('private'), July 22, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 295.

¹⁴¹ The Admiralty to Hawke, July 21, 1755, Adm. sec., *out-letters*, Pub. Rec. Off.

¹⁴² Doddington, *Diary*, July 21, 1755.

if they laughed at the First Lord's vagaries ;¹⁴³ for Newcastle's satellites were carefully trained. Next morning Anson begged for reconsideration, suggesting that the instructions should be so changed as to apply only to ships of the line.¹⁴⁴

A meeting of the 'select members of the Regency' (as Fox put it) was held apparently on the 22nd, and the instructions were then found to have been altered. How deeply the Cumberlands resented this may be judged from Fox's indignant recital ; while Cumberland showed his own wrath when he vented his feelings to his party. It was not, in fact, until Newcastle had (equivocally) insisted that the changes were conformable to His Majesty's wishes that the leader of the War Party finally yielded. When the instructions came up for ratification by the full Council, Fox asked Anson pointedly if there were not some objections to them. 'Yes', admitted the Admiral, 'a hundred ; but it pleases those at the upper end of the table, and will signify nothing, for the French will declare war, if they have not done it already.'¹⁴⁵

Three times had the First Lord outmanœuvred his enemies ; and the allusion to the King was the cleverest of his tactics. And yet, in spite of all, the Cumberland perseverance had largely been repaid ; and surely it would not be long before

¹⁴³ See Doddington, *Diary*, July 21, 1755.

¹⁴⁴ Newcastle to Holderness, July 22, 1755 ('entre nous').

¹⁴⁵ Doddington, *Diary*, August 18, 1755 ; Newcastle to Holderness ('entre nous'), July 22, 1755.

men ceased to take him seriously. Fox, for his part, was quick to repent the impulse which had led him to sign the new orders, and strongly protested to Newcastle against the 'absurdity' (as he expressed it) of first beginning a war, and then taking no notice of the weapons that were to be used against you. The Duke of Marlborough likewise remonstrated; and Cumberland himself was soon seconding his friends.¹⁴⁶ In fact, Fox gives us to understand that Newcastle was so peevish that he 'would hardly speak to His Royal Highness'.¹⁴⁷ However this may be, he was certainly inflexible. Had not the orders been limited, he wrote to Hanover, the war would have begun in the Channel within forty-eight hours.¹⁴⁸

But the War Party, after precipitating a rupture with France, was not to be beaten in a comparative trifle. Though failing again to make his protests successful,¹⁴⁹ His Royal Highness had still the chance of calling a meeting, and proclaiming his opinions to others besides Newcastle. And so, on the very day (August 5) of his latest reverse, he notified to Anson (who was dining at Holland House) a meeting to take place on that evening; and the result, as we might naturally suppose, was

¹⁴⁶ Newcastle to Holderness, August 6, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 3; Doddington, *Diary*, August 18, 1755.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, August 3, 1755.

¹⁴⁸ Newcastle to Holderness ('private'), July 22, 1755.

¹⁴⁹ Doddington, *Diary*, August 18, 1755.

an unlimited instruction to Hawke.¹⁵⁰ Next day a full Council endorsed the decision.¹⁵¹ At last the War Party had triumphed.

Robinson wrote to Hanover that the instructions now given to Hawke were tantamount to a declaration of war.¹⁵² Yet, as Waldegrave keenly expressed it, 'either extreme had been better than this compromise.'¹⁵³ Only as a chance of freebooting could the policy be justified as profitable. Before the end of the year 300 trading vessels and 6,000 seamen were taken by the English fleets.¹⁵⁴

But somewhat over a fortnight after the struggle in the Council was ended, that figure who in statesmanship and character was nothing if not original, and of whom old Newcastle felt always a certain dread, came to a meeting after having 'dined' (so Newcastle significantly observes), and could find no finer sport than to tease the First Lord pointedly on the part he had played so ill.¹⁵⁵ It is perhaps a fitting episode with which to end this foolish controversy.

Great consternation naturally took place at the

¹⁵⁰ Doddington, *Diary*, August 6, 1755; Newcastle to Holderness, August 6, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 310. Newcastle was now afraid that Cumberland would insist upon extending these orders to all His Majesty's fleets, but apparently no such suggestion was made.

¹⁵¹ Robinson to Holderness, August 6, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 1.

¹⁵² Robinson to Holderness, August 6, 1755.

¹⁵³ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 48.

¹⁵⁴ Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power*, p. 285.

¹⁵⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 22, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 241. Granville even criticized Cumberland on this occasion.

Court of Versailles upon the news of Boscawen's treacherous attack.¹⁵⁶ M. Bussy, who had gone as envoy to Hanover, found it necessary, of course, to return—much to the disappointment of Newcastle, who had hoped to hire him for information, though a certain M. Cressener, who had access to much inner intelligence of affairs, had already been engaged for similar purposes. Meanwhile, although diplomatic relations had ceased between the two courts, the French persisted in their policy of respecting the peace; and when a frigate, bound for South Carolina to land its new governor, was captured by a French squadron, the Court of Versailles ordered prompt release of the prize. Whatever were the motives—and one is tempted to doubt that righteous indignation was the chief one—it was clearly determined to fix upon England the whole odium of this piracy.

While Cumberland and Fox were dominating the naval policy of the Ministry, it must not be supposed that Leicester House was digesting its wrath in meekness or silence. The truth leaked out at the time the King was leaving for Hanover that His Majesty intended negotiating a marriage between his grandson and a princess of Brunswick. Her Royal Highness, who knew the prospective

¹⁵⁶ Secret enclosure from Cressener, July 20, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 365. Newcastle heard that Rouillé was proposing to impugn England before every Court of Europe, and was talking loudly of the '*pyratterie de cette nation et la fausseté de ses ministres*'.—Newcastle to Holderness, July 22, 1755.

bride and dreaded a diminution of her own influence, at once set about prejudicing her young son against the match, although the King persisted in the negotiation, abetted by Newcastle, whose mind was always elated at the idea of making treaties. The Princess also felt deep resentment at the presence of Cumberland and Fox on the Board of Regency; and she complained much of the First Lord, who was humouring the King's whim, and would always fall back on the excuse of 'his party' requiring this or that.¹⁵⁷

But the Duke of Cumberland was in no way disposed to lord it over the less favoured members of his family. If he had never given them cause to think kindly of him in the past, there was an excellent opportunity, now that his position was assured, for giving a manifestation of goodwill. With this desire he visited the Princess in person, and proposed to take his two nephews on a pleasure excursion to see the new fleet at Portsmouth. Uncertain what course to pursue, the Princess avoided giving a direct answer; but later she concluded to accept the invitation, and instructed the Prince's governor to make the necessary arrangements.¹⁵⁸ Then at last, when Waldegrave informed his mistress that the plans had been made to start, he found to his disappoint-

¹⁵⁷ Doddington, *Diary*, May 27, 1755; Waldegrave, pp. 30-1, 40-1.

¹⁵⁸ Stone to Newcastle, June 24, 1755: Add. MSS., 32856, f. 165.

ment that the Princess had already put off the trip—a decision which practically amounted to a refusal.¹⁵⁹

Cumberland was apparently indifferent to the discourtesy. But Fox was dejected, having an ambition to unite the two rivals on the only firm ground for the Cumberlands to stand upon.¹⁶⁰ It was an odd notion, but not an uncommon one at the time, that the 'Butcher' was of much the same calibre as Richard III, and meant nothing but harm to his youthful nephews ;¹⁶¹ but however much the idea may have impressed itself upon the boys, the hatred of the Princess lay undoubtedly far deeper.

During the early months of 1755 scarce a sound had arisen from the underling at the Pay Office. If it is true that Pitt resented the preference shown to Fox, he had at least given no sign that such was

¹⁵⁹ Doddington, *Diary*, June 29, 1755. The Newcastles, who felt injured in not being consulted in the affair, were naturally but little disturbed by the *dénouement*.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, June 27, 1755: Add. MSS., 32856, f. 270. The Duke's only ground for disappointment was his wish that there might be less friction between the two branches of the royal house.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 27, 1755: *ibid.* f. 272. A cordial union between the two would, on the other hand, have been equally unwelcome.

¹⁶⁰ Doddington, *Diary*, June 29, 1755. We can hardly go so far as to say that Fox had been proposing a coalition ; but no doubt the thought was present in his mind, as a means of turning Newcastle out of office. Hence it is possible that it was he who instigated Cumberland's invitation.

¹⁶¹ Jesse, *Memoirs of the Court of England*, III. 190.

his feeling, and his former ally, with characteristic finesse, had 'expressed the most earnest desire' to continue their acquaintance, 'professing that his views and ideas were still the same.'¹⁶² However Pitt may have really felt toward the man he once described as 'odious', he would hardly have been likely to reprobate the policy of the War Party, the germ of which he had himself supported when he and Fox were allies. But tantalizing as must have been his exclusion from all share in his Government's foreign policy, there was one thing he could not endure much longer, and that was neglect of his own political value. Hence it was that about the middle of April Pitt awoke from his lethargy and determined to *compel* recognition.

The elder Horace Walpole ('Old Horace', as he was popularly called) whose prestige had once been considerable among the Whigs, had the hope of cementing a union of both Fox and Pitt with the Ministry, and hence his wishes aptly coincided with the Paymaster's yearnings for promotion. Through the medium of Walpole, Pitt enlightened Newcastle that he would not demand the Seals at present, but

¹⁶² Grenville's narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 432. Grenville leads us to infer that this was said at the time at which Fox dissolved their alliance in order to join Newcastle. Doubtless Fox was perfectly willing to remain in Pitt's good graces, if the latter were willing; and he was certainly too experienced a politician to believe that his present position was likely to be permanent. On the other hand, the statement of Walpole (I. 398) that he tried to get Legge to suggest to Pitt that he make a bid for the Exchequer, while he (Fox) should have the Pay Office, has too much the air of gossip to be credible.

he insisted upon knowing whether or not he should have them at the first opportunity ; in the meantime he must have the 'royal countenance', and especially some 'pledge of security' (which we may suppose meant a seat in the Cabinet).¹⁶³ The response was not explicit, and certainly 'not flattering'. The Paymaster must indeed have

¹⁶³ Harris, III. 35. The two chief authorities for this interview are Walpole (*Memoirs*, I. 397) and Doddington (*Diary*, July 16, 1755), who substantially agree as to the facts. Walpole, however, explicitly attributes the initiative to Pitt, while Doddington ascribes it to 'Old Horace', whether sent by Newcastle or not he cannot say positively. It seems indeed inconceivable that Newcastle should have deliberately stirred up trouble where there had been only an acceptable silence ; and in April no political reasons could have justified an experiment so risky. Besides, we shall note later that Fox expressed his conviction in June—a whole month before the subsidy agitation—that Newcastle had no intention of treating with anybody. If, on the other hand, we study the position of Pitt, the motives for an overture on his part are thoroughly intelligible. However true it may have been that Old Horace gave him the impression that his visit was by authority—for such appears to have been the impression, if Pitt's 'Remarks' (*Chatham Corres.* I. 134) are to be considered authentic—it was clearly Pitt, not Newcastle, who had most reason to bend the knee. No man of Pitt's temperament could stand political exclusion indefinitely, and no inherent sense of dignity was likely to restrain him after the way he had cringed to Newcastle in the spring of 1754.

Such, then, are the grounds for the writer's belief that Pitt's biographers err in attributing the initiative to Newcastle. Dr. von Ruville himself admits (I. 358) that in April 'Pitt's support had no immediate value to Newcastle' ; and it was not till the month of July that the subsidies—much to the Duke's astonishment—began to meet with opposition.

reckoned greatly on the First Minister's terror of him, whereas the autocrat of the Cabinet, having passed through an harmonious session of Parliament, was in one of his sanguine moods, and had no intention of jeopardizing his power by making room for a firebrand. In fact Fox had it from Hartington that the meeting of the First Lord with Walpole—which took place two days before the King left for Hanover—ended rather unpleasantly for the emissary.¹⁶⁴

As for Pitt, it may have been to cover his mortification that he told Fox later what depth of scorn he felt for the Duke of Newcastle, who was so often successful in 'attempting to make fools of all mankind'.¹⁶⁵ No one would perhaps be willing to gainsay the charge, but in the present instance was it exactly Newcastle's fault?

But Pitt had not emerged from a wilderness of obscurity to be crushed at the first blow; if he could not force the bolt of the Foreign Office or drive the First Lord into a panic, he must at any rate turn and rend some one. It happened that certain indications had lately come from Leicester House that the prodigal might return and be welcome.¹⁶⁶ What surer passport, therefore, than

¹⁶⁴ Doddington, *Diary*, July 16, 1755.

¹⁶⁵ Fox to Ellis, June 2, 1755: Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 157.

¹⁶⁶ Walpole remarks keenly that from the moment of 'old Horace's' failure, Pitt 'cast his eyes toward the successor'.—*Memoirs*, I. 397. There at Leicester House was a chance of reconstructing his political power. See also Shelburne's autobiography: Fitzmaurice, I. 59.

to quarrel openly with the faction the Princess detested ?

Early in May both the great men of the Commons were present at a gathering in Lord Hillsborough's garden. Thinking Fox had taken his leave, Pitt declared to his host that his connexion with Fox was over ; the other was now a regent and a cabinet councillor, and he (Pitt) would be 'second to nobody'. Just then the Secretary-at-War rejoined the company, and Pitt, being unable to cool his passion, made a similar but stronger declaration to Fox himself. If the latter 'succeeded and so made way for him, he would not accept the seals of Secretary from him, for that would be owning an obligation and superiority that he would never acknowledge ; he would owe nothing but to himself', and then he became more and more extravagant in his language.

Fox, however, kept his temper, and indeed was possibly as much amused as he at first had been astonished. Having at last found an opening to put in a word, he asked his quondam friend what would put them on the same ground ; whereupon Pitt made the enigmatical reply 'A winter in the Cabinet and a summer's Regency'.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Doddington, *Diary*, May 9, 1755. It would appear that Pitt's jealousy of Fox's increasing prominence was too strong for him to hide, especially if we are to suppose that he now wanted a Cabinet seat (see above) and was unable to obtain it. Fox must have wondered not a little at this outburst, and it was not till some time later that he came to regard it as a political device.

Hillsborough, a friend of both men, tried afterwards to effect a reconciliation ; but Pitt repeated that, whereas he ‘esteemed Mr. Fox, all connexion with him was at an end’.¹⁶⁸

In fact the Paymaster found this pastime so congenial to his unbridled emotions that he could not desist with one tirade. A few days after the first encounter he drove in state to Holland House to renew the battle, and was soon reiterating his sentiments.¹⁶⁹

Fox asked his guest if he had suspected him of having tried to rise above him ? No, Pitt had not.

‘Yet’, persisted Fox, ‘we are on incompatible lines ?’

Not on ‘incompatible’, was Pitt’s answer, but ‘convergent’ ; sometimes they might act together, but ‘for himself, he would accept power from no hands’. He then continued his protest against Fox’s position as Regent. ‘Here is the Duke, king ; and you are his minister.’

‘Whatever you think,’ replied Fox with much spirit, ‘the Duke does not think himself aggrandized by being of the Regency, when he has no more power than I have.’ Fox afterwards repeated it

¹⁶⁸ Doddington, *Diary*, May 10, 1755.

¹⁶⁹ Doddington alludes to the second encounter in an entry on May 13, but has not heard the particulars. Walpole, who gives us the details, is certainly wrong in assigning it to July, as we know from Fox’s letters and from Doddington’s entry on July 16. The second meeting, according to Fox, took place on the 12th of May.

to the Duke, who quite agreed with his friend's view.¹⁷⁰

The visit of the Paymaster was of some length, and according to Fox he expressed strong feelings of friendship for him and much enmity toward the Duke of Newcastle; 'at all events,' wrote the Secretary-at-War to his friend, Hartington, 'I am, in Pitt's opinion, blameless.'¹⁷¹ His Royal Highness, as also the Devonshires, felt nevertheless that the matter should be kept as quiet as possible for fear of injuring Fox,¹⁷² and the occurrence was actually unknown to the Newcastles for several months.

But Pitt had not yet exhausted himself, and spoke complainingly to many, of Fox's growing intimacy with Granville, which had been one of the stumbling-blocks of the first meeting, and which Fox himself at first believed to be the point at issue. 'It was one of my crimes,' wrote the Secretary-at-War, 'that Lord Granville was my friend, . . . who was so much Pitt's enemy.' But Horace Walpole regarded it as significant that the day before the visit to Holland House Pitt had been a guest of the Princess; had she been unappeased by his first outbreak and sent him to make another?

¹⁷⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 397-8. Fox and Cumberland may have been thinking of the latter's failure to become 'sole regent'.

¹⁷¹ Fox to Hartington, May 13, 1755: Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 155.

¹⁷² Ibid.; Fox to Ellis, June 2, 1755: Waldegrave, p. 157.

Childish as the episode may be considered, it was not without its decisive effect upon Fox. The mistake that he committed when he accepted a seat in the house of the Newcastles was now beginning to show its full force. Too clever to become Pitt's tool, he was not single-hearted enough ever again to be his ally, and when the importance of Pitt came at last to receive recognition, Fox's political fortunes were on the decline. The acceptance of the Cabinet-seat had been practically a token of submission; so Pitt must have read it, and so in later times he proved that he did; for Fox it was a fall of fifty per cent in his political value.

Yet it may have been that he was careless now of what might affect his career. Perhaps his ambition had died when he learned in March 1754 the real nature of the person with whom he had to deal for place and power. Perhaps, finally, he had thought only of the task of supporting the man whom he honoured above all others; and indeed had he but resigned when Cumberland's power was terminated, '*le bon feu de la guerre*,' as the City called him,¹⁷³ might yet have atoned for his desertion of Pitt. But in his continuance lay a mistake that proved fatal.

Still, even as it was, Fox had gleaned some advantage. In the spring and summer of 1755 he had seconded his friend's policy in Cabinet and

¹⁷³ Fox to Devonshire, November 4, 1755: Torrens, II. 240.

Regency, and, with the weapons thus forged, had helped inflict another blow upon the man he justly hated. Once again had peril arisen from that faction, which Newcastle had created and Pelham had so rightfully dreaded. The Cumberlands were now the War Party and the ultimate result was ' Minorca '.

CHAPTER V

SUBSIDIES AND RECRUITING

PERHAPS the only palliation for the part which the Duke of Newcastle plays in history is the indisputable fact that the crisis which confronted him in almost every part of the world was quite enough to stagger a far more capable man than he. Deficient in the force and creative skill which marks a statesman of genius, he thought of nothing but clinging to power by a policy of trimming. He trimmed between a sovereign with continental interests and a somewhat insular Parliament whose chief concern was commerce; again, he trimmed between the War Party and the over-cautious Hardwicke; and he trimmed between his fear of isolation (in event of war) and a stubbornness which blunted all his arts of conciliation; and finally his dread of war itself was often counter-balanced by political timidity. His vision was ever narrow; his policy—when he possessed any—was too often dictated by the politics of the moment. Diplomacy alone may be said to have lain within his ken; and yet he was sadly deficient both in the capacity for bold conceptions and in the ability to guide. Of what use was all his experience in diplomatic wiles when he was willing to let

the danger of unadjusted difficulties with France creep further and ever further upon the possibilities of peace, and meanwhile stood, as he himself confessed, distrusted both at Vienna and the Hague ?¹ And all this time the nation was admittedly unprepared for war.²

We have already mentioned the conclusion of the treaty with Hesse, which was ratified by the Council on June 24.³ The Chancellor, when desired to affix the great seal to the transaction, 'only bowed,' declared Fox, 'and their Lordships signed it as a matter of course.'⁴ Evidently Newcastle was unopposed by any member of the Council, and it only remained for the Commons to accept or reject the subsidy. In the meantime—though Williams had been sent to St. Petersburg to try his luck with bribes—the treaty with the Czarina was far from being assured; and Austria and Holland were as obdurate as ever. 'The Queen of Hungary will have nothing to do with us'⁵—so Fox declared to Doddington, with conscious satisfaction in Newcastle's failures.

While affairs abroad were presenting an almost hopeless tangle, the state of politics at home was

¹ Newcastle to Yorke, July 4, 1755: Add. MSS., 32856, f. 461.

² Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 7, 1755: Add. MSS., 32855, f. 381.

³ Newcastle to Holderness, June 24, 1755: Add. MSS., 32856, f. 153.

⁴ Doddington, *Diary*, August 18, 1755.

⁵ *Ibid.*, July 22, 1755.

growing more and more intricate and perplexing. The first political crisis had been ended by Fox's promotion ; but the latter's purchased allegiance was no more than a truce in the political battle. The growing ascendancy of the War Party and the factious conduct of Leicester House were both in a measure the inevitable consequences of Newcastle's incapacity as a political leader. Thus while Halifax, voicing the general opinion, was loud in his strictures upon the Ministry,⁶ the Cumberlands were stronger than ever before, and Pitt was in collusion with Leicester House.

Shortly after the scene at Holland House, Sir Richard Lyttelton betook himself as emissary to the 'Cousinhood' to inquire on behalf of Lord Bute (the Princess's confidential adviser) what terms they would demand for entering into a closer connexion with Leicester House. Several meetings came about as a result, and Pitt was assured 'in the strongest manner' of the Princess's 'protection and support'.⁷ It was the logical sequel of Pitt's quarrel with Fox ; and one of the conditions of the treaty which followed was a promise on the part of the Pittites to 'oppose the Duke of Cumberland and raise a clamour against him'.⁸ So Fox was apparently right in regarding the quarrel as trumped up by Leicester House. Now, as a result, the two centres of disaffection had become one.

⁶ Doddington, *Diary*, May 24, 1755.

⁷ Grenville's narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 432.

⁸ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 39.

Whether or not he suffered anxious moments at times, the First Lord seemed disposed to let well enough alone. 'In a word,' wrote Fox to Hartington, 'the Duke of Newcastle is so far from courting that he seems afraid of being courted, which he is in no danger of.'⁹ Fox firmly believed that, whatever his 'managements' at Leicester House, Pitt had no understanding with Newcastle;¹⁰ and the latter—except for some overtures to Kew¹¹—kept remarkably free of intrigues.

In less than a month, however, Fox's words were but partly true; for the First Lord did become 'courted'—and by the man he had so recently snubbed. Jemmy Grenville, being closeted one day with the Duke, went freely into the wrongs of his friend, who he said yearned for 'confidence and regard'—which, being an 'equivocal' expression, like most of Pitt's, gave occasion for much speculation on the part of the Newcastles. Hardwicke interpreted the meaning as 'employment', but something lower than Secretary of

⁹ Fox to Hartington, June 2, 1755: *ibid.*, p. 159.

¹⁰ Fox to Ellis, June 2, 1755: *ibid.*, p. 157.

¹¹ Fox tells us that Newcastle and Hardwicke were trying to gain a foothold at Leicester House—he understood, by disparaging the Duke of Cumberland—but that their efforts had not succeeded.—Fox to Hartington, June 2, 1755. As far as it concerns Cumberland, the story may well have been gossip; but it is not at all unlikely that the Newcastles were seeking to establish a counterpoise to Pitt, the man who had just become the protégé of Leicester House. Not infrequently in politics the Newcastles followed a move by a counter-move. See below, note 67.

State ; ‘ possibly the lot of his guardian friend, Fox, might serve the turn, and Cabinet Councillor may satisfy *pro hic et nunc*.’ If so, the Chancellor believed it would be a ‘ cheap bargain ’.¹²

Pitt was obviously a puzzle to all parties. Fox had believed—at any rate before the former’s junction with Leicester House—that his rival had no plans whatever ;¹³ and ‘ Old Horace ’ was still inclined to that opinion.¹⁴ Certainly the Paymaster’s behaviour was peculiar, for not long after the rupture with Fox, Pitt’s confidential mouth-piece, Lord Temple, had ‘ taken great pains ’ to assure Doddington how well satisfied they all felt with the Secretary-at-War ;¹⁵ and now the great orator was making overtures¹⁶ to the First Lord, whom he had recently condemned to the Princess in the most scathing terms.¹⁷ Possibly this latter action was merely a political device, since the Princess had her own grievance against Newcastle,¹⁸ and (according to Fox) the Duke and his adviser had tried in vain to obtain forgiveness.¹⁹ At all

¹² Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 5, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32856, f. 484.

¹³ Fox to Hartington, May 13, 1755 : Waldegrave, p. 155.

¹⁴ Fox to Ellis, June 2, 1755.

¹⁵ Doddington, *Diary*, May 30, 1755. Such duplicity was powerless to deceive an old intriguer like Doddington. As this happened before the ‘ treaty ’ with Leicester House, the diarist concluded that they were fearful of their position. It looked as if Pitt may have cherished some misgivings.

¹⁶ Through Grenville.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Pages 284–5.

¹⁹ Fox to Hartington, June 2, 1755. See note 11.

events, these fluctuations tend to show that while discontent was general, the elements of discord had as yet formed no policy. All that was needed was an instrument—what it was to be will soon appear.

Meanwhile unfriendliness of foreign courts and domestic opposition to subsidies warned the Duke of Newcastle of the necessity of making his plans for the next session of Parliament. Fox would at least be passively loyal, and might be induced to become active as well ; but it was not so much a question of the number of lieutenants in the corps as the amount of strength in the ‘ enemy ’—a term which of course signified nothing as yet. On the 11th of July the Duke wrote his first letter to Hanover on the perplexing problem. The danger-mark was undoubtedly Pitt, who had begun to stir again, and Egmont, who might be called the vizier of Leicester House and was known to be foremost in its councils.²⁰ In the first place it must be considered what would satisfy the Paymaster, who might be contented with a promise of the ‘ royal countenance ’—another way of saying that the ban of excommunication might be lifted ; but, if this proved too vague, the Duke hoped they ‘ might be allowed ’ to assure him of a seat in the Cabinet Council. ‘ Mr. Fox has been gratified in the manner he desired, and therefore can have no objection to any of these regulations, made without any partiality, and singly with a view to carry

²⁰ Doddington, *Diary*, June 21, 1755.

His Majesty's measures in these difficult times in the House of Commons, it being always to be understood that proper regard and confidence should be showed to Mr. Fox.' As to Egmont, the Tory leader had been disappointed by the retarded promotion to the Household, and a Vice-Treasurership of Ireland must be found somehow, else he would certainly return to the Opposition. Lee would do very well for the business of the Exchequer; and the allegiance of these three would make all things safe. Such were the tentative suggestions which Newcastle communicated to Holderness.²¹ 'In all administrations,' he lamented, 'some one must be the butt. I am very undeservedly so at present.'²²

In none of these letters to Hanover—and he wrote three on this occasion—was there any allusion to the conference which took place five days previously between the Paymaster and Charles Yorke, and which Hardwicke had arranged.²³ Doubtless Pitt

²¹ Newcastle to Holderness, July 11, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 37.

²² Newcastle to Holderness (*entre nous*), July 11, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 53.

²³ The Chancellor—in order apparently to avoid seeing Pitt himself, which Newcastle had suggested—planned that his son Charles should meet the Paymaster at a *levée*, and that, he thought, might 'open something'.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 5, 1755. Charles managed it so well that Pitt was induced to call upon him on the following day (July 6). Nevertheless the Paymaster 'talked in such a complaining manner of the Duke of Newcastle' that Yorke, who had been instructed to propose a meeting with Newcastle on his own

had just become aware of the First Lord's clash with the War Party, and conditions both at home and abroad had brightened his political prospects. He now told his suitor impatiently that since the Duke would not terminate his proscription by the Closet, he should abandon his insistence on a promise of the Seals ; but no longer was it a question of ' confidence and regard ', which in practice meant nothing at all ; he would accept no favour from Newcastle, or ever owe him anything ; and he was evidently incensed at being approached without something definite. The Chancellor's son was powerless to stem this flood of wrath. So Newcastle, who had welcomed his enemy's overtures ²⁴ as a means of feeling the ground, had only received a trouncing for his pains.²⁵

On the 20th the faithful Holderness replied

authority, deemed it wiser for the interview to be put off till Hardwicke might ' judge of the effect ' of what Pitt had said. Apparently the latter had seen Hardwicke for a few minutes just before visiting Yorke, and it is possible that the Chancellor had told him that Yorke wished to see him.

²⁴ Page 298.

²⁵ The authorities for the interview are Doddington, *Diary*, July 16, 1755 ; Yorke to Hardwicke, July 7, 1755 ; Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, III. 29. Naturally the Ministers, whose relations with foreign powers had already become seriously strained, were quick to avail themselves of overtures seemingly so humble. As usual, too, the Duke wished to purchase services as cheaply as possible. At the same time he was indisposed to offer anything tangible without having first obtained the royal consent ; and as yet the movement against the subsidies seemed scarcely sufficient to make such an effort distinctly imperative.

to his friend's appeals for royal consent to the 'system' he was contemplating. The result was not very assuring. Lady Yarmouth had entered heartily into the plan, but the King had done little more than listen. Obviously hatred of Pitt was the principal barrier. The Earl had at first suggested that a smile would be more appreciated than a Cabinet seat, but in a later audience, becoming braver, he added that 'a little outward civility might be the means of preventing Pitt from forcing himself into the Closet'. This was the best that the Secretary could do for the present, although he seemed to be hopeful.²⁶

In the meantime the murmurs against subsidies were growing louder, and the Hessian Treaty being now a *fait accompli*, the air was charged with resistance. Yet, so far as the Duke could perceive, his lieutenants were showing no disposition to rebel, and the most he could do was to anticipate revolt by striving to secure all who might be tempted in that direction. The Duke's consternation can therefore be imagined when disaffection took root in his own Treasury Board. When the warrant for the Hessian levy-money, after being passed by the Lords Justices, came before the Treasury for signature, Newcastle, having signed first, handed it to his Chancellor of the Exchequer, who silently passed it over (without signing) to Dupplin and Nugent; and West told

²⁶ Holderness to Newcastle ('*entre nous*'), July 20, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 262.

his superior officer—who had not observed the incident in question—that Legge was loud in his opposition to the measure. All this Newcastle reported to the King through Holderness.²⁷

The little Chancellor had, in fact, found a blissful revenge upon the master who had slighted him and talked of his insignificance. Newcastle at first wondered if he was in collusion with any one,²⁸ and in the meantime, Pelham-like, he strove to smother the flames. Of course Legge must be dismissed, but it would not be wise, thought the First Lord, to let him go out empty-handed, and if the King would give him a peerage, the rascal's silence would be cheaply purchased.²⁹ Lee was fortunately ready to fill his place, and a few days later the Duke was gratified by the King's consent to promote Egmont and Pitt in the manner desired.³⁰

But the 'patriotism' of the Chancellor of the Exchequer had become the cry of the hour. For the first and only time in his life Henry Bilson Legge was famous. Leicester House, quick to see a harbinger of discontent, was eager to welcome the offender, and Pitt forthwith introduced him

²⁷ Newcastle to Holderness, July 25, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 354.

²⁸ Newcastle to Holderness (first '*entre nous*'), July 25, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 356.

²⁹ Newcastle to Holderness (second '*entre nous*'), July 25, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 262.

³⁰ Holderness to Newcastle ('*entre nous*'), July 20, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 262.

to the Princess and her friends, much to the annoyance of Grenville, hitherto the Paymaster's favourite.³¹ So after a year of intrigue against the Ministry, and fast and loose play with the Cumberlands, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had at last found a haven in Leicester House.

The Cumberlands—at all events their chiefs—were out of favour with all parties. Fox, who had made a friend of Stone as well as Granville, said the former had lost his influence in Leicester House on that account; ³² and the young Prince felt such aversion to his uncle that Waldegrave, one of the most peaceable of men, was in despair. But with the magnates of the Ministry the party was hardly less at variance; and His Royal Highness, not content with dominating the Council, was now threatening to blow up an opposition to the Treaties. 'Sea war, no continent, no subsidy!' was the universal cry; 'and you may imagine,' wrote Newcastle to his underling abroad, 'that the Duke's constant discourse . . . must add weight to such language.'³³ Shortly afterward the First Lord became so fretful that he refused to speak to His Royal Highness, and the Secretary-at-War came in also for a share of His Grace's dislike.³⁴

³¹ Grenville's narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 433.

³² Fox to Hartington, July 16, 1755: Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 160.

³³ Newcastle to Hardwicke ('*entre nous*'), July 25, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 362.

³⁴ We have already noted the circumstances, p. 282.

Perhaps Newcastle felt emboldened just then because the Cumberland foreign policy had received a temporary set-back and Hawke was to sail with limited instructions, 'All this', declared Fox (in speaking also of the Hessian Treaty), is weak and ruinous.'³⁵

No amount of urging could make Legge sign the Hessian warrant; he 'still persisted in his patriotism',³⁶ and Newcastle could not get rid of him because his conduct was so popular that dismissal might make it more so. The one hope of breaking up the cabal was to detach Pitt. 'To send for him,' wrote the Duke to Hardwicke, 'will raise his vanity and his terms . . . but I should think Charles might write to him that something had happened since their last conversation, to make Your Lordship wish to see him, when he next comes to town.' The Duke felt that Hardwicke must be the one to beard the lion, for he it was, 'as Pitt and every one knew,' who had saved him from dismissal, and they had corresponded since. In the meantime Stone was ordered to ask the Princess to 'assist'.³⁷

³⁵ Doddington, *Diary*, August 3, 1755.

³⁶ Rigby to Bedford, August 21, 1755: *Bedford Corres.* II. 165.

³⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 26, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 382. 'Your Lordship must judge,' he wrote, 'how we shall get at him (Pitt).' For his own part, he said, Pitt had 'never been near me since he *personally* fell upon me in the House of Commons.' This was doubtless an allusion to Pitt's tirade against the 'edicts of one too powerful subject'. See p. 211.

Hardwicke did not venture to refuse the unpleasant commission, but the King's consent to Pitt's advancement had been a trifle vague, and he failed to see that the Cabinet had any authority to make promises.³⁸ The Chancellor was not fond of standing on doubtful ground.

On the 9th of August Hardwicke had his chance 'to feel the pulse of the great Pitt',³⁹ as his friend put it, and the interview lasted an hour and three-quarters. His Lordship began craftily with Pitt's offences of the past year, and assured him that he and Newcastle had laboured for the Paymaster till the latter had made it impossible for them to do so longer. The Seals had been out of the question when Pitt demanded them through Walpole,⁴⁰ but since then the Chancellor felt that they had gained ground, and were at all events authorized to speak to him.

Pitt was modesty personified. He had never wished to force himself into the Secretary's office, never would wish it until the King should be inclined to give it, and cared far more for the

³⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, July 28, 1755: *ibid.* f. 396.

³⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 8, 1755: *Add. MSS.*, 32858, f. 39.

⁴⁰ According to the account which Pitt gave to Doddington, the former took sharp exception to the suggestion that he had 'so much desired the Seals', and denied that he had ever applied for them. Doubtless he remembered with mortification Walpole's failure, and was anxious to disavow all complicity in that errand. Pitt was not above equivocation when politics dictated it.

King's favour than for any employment.⁴¹ But the obstacle which seemed insuperable, was the eternal question of the Treaties, which Pitt said would entail a 'general plan' for the Continent, and that the nation could not afford. As it was, the American and maritime war—of which he approved—would increase the expense and the debt. He then expounded the notion (which certainly showed no little judgement, as well as political courage) that any loss of Hanover would be but temporary, and it would be cheaper to buy it back when the war was finally ended. We can readily see that Pitt was feeling his way to a change of tactics. These remarks on the question of policy contain his first endorsement of the policy of the War Party. Indeed it would seem as though he had quite lost faith in continuing to expect the good graces of Newcastle.⁴²

After the Chancellor finished a reply in defence

⁴¹ According to his own version Pitt intimated pointedly that His Majesty's antipathy proceeded from misrepresentation. Both the suspicion and the expression of it were natural at this time—especially if we consider his repeated disappointments, but no mention of this is given us in the Chancellor's account.

⁴² We may judge this hope to have been his principal reason for not espousing the cause of the War Party against Newcastle. In allying with Leicester House he had quietly forged a political weapon for use if necessary, but up to this time he had hoped, as Newcastle's position became less secure, that the First Lord might finally employ him. But as flattery had failed, and neutrality was arduous—and so far not successful—Pitt's patience was becoming exhausted.

of the subsidies, Pitt inquired what Fox, Lee and Legge thought of them,⁴³ as he could not stand alone. Hardwicke was unable to say, although he thought they could be relied upon; but when Pitt declared that he could not act without his friends, the Chancellor replied that their conduct rested with him. The question of the Cabinet Council was brought up several times, but Pitt on every occasion parried it.⁴⁴

One thing which seems almost humorous was the plan which Hardwicke laid to bring Newcastle into the toils, a scheme to which the Paymaster consented, with the assurance that he would see the Duke whenever the latter requested it. The Chancellor did not think Pitt would adhere to his objections to the subsidies, but would go on making difficulties upon measures, a design which was probably to enhance his own value.⁴⁵

⁴³ This must have been simply a bit of finesse on Pitt's part. He knew well enough what Legge's opinion was, and it is more than probable (considering his close tie with Leicester House) that he knew Lee's as well; while mention of Fox was probably intended to arouse the fear that the two were united. At any rate, whether or not Pitt was trying to push the Chancellor into a corner, the latter easily saved himself when the Paymaster spoke of his 'friends'.

⁴⁴ Obviously Pitt would not be satisfied with anything but the Seals. But he may have thought it good policy not to make any decided refusals. Such might have effectually closed the door to all future negotiation.

⁴⁵ Hardwicke to Newcastle, August 9, 1755: Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, III. 30. Pitt's version of the above interview (if reported accurately) is given us in Doddington, *Diary*, September 2, 1755.

Newcastle replied to his friend's account of the affair, that his own view of the case corresponded with Hardwicke's, but that they 'must have him if possible'. His letter then consisted of a long list of questions which his evident fear of the forthcoming interview made him afraid to take the personal responsibility of answering. Could he avoid suggesting the Seals to the King? Should he show the famous Cabinet minute, renouncing a continental 'plan',⁴⁶ and thereby risk its misuse? Should he speak to Fox, who would soon know all and think himself undermined, &c. &c.?⁴⁷ To all of which the Chancellor patiently made answer number by number, only begging that as he intended to leave for Wimpole to spend a short holiday, he might not be sent for 'without absolute necessity'.⁴⁸

At last it had come out unmistakably that Pitt was hostile to His Majesty's proposed 'system' on the Continent, and would be likely, indeed, to oppose it on the floor of the Commons. It was a puzzling situation for the Ministers, and the news that two such prominent figures were committed against the Treaties might bid fair to start a general revolution against them in the coming session. If Pitt were to be bought, the Newcastles knew

⁴⁶ The minute of July 30. Hardwicke answered the question in the negative.

⁴⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 12, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 114.

⁴⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, August 12, 1755: *ibid.* f. 120.

that the bargain must be made before more voices were raised in the common cry, and even then the Paymaster's habits of contradicting past principles might not stand this particular strain.

But if the much-sought orator had presaged a violent opposition, the designs of Leicester House lay deeper. Ex-Secretary Yonge⁴⁹ having conveniently died, it was arranged that Newcastle should meet Egmont on the 26th and offer him the vacant Vice-Treasurership. With a view to assisting in the matter, Mr. Cresset, secretary to the Princess, having assured the First Lord of Her Royal Highness's satisfaction with matters then on foot, offered to 'prepare' Egmont for the interview; and as these two were the most influential vassals of the Princess, the measure seemed decidedly auspicious. The shock must therefore have been great when Newcastle learned shortly afterward that Lee, the man who had for nearly a year been designated for the Exchequer, had come out against the Treaties.⁵⁰ Fox had heard a month ago that the Princess had forbidden Sir George to accept the office,⁵¹ and now the truth seemed only too apparent; and this was number

⁴⁹ Fox's predecessor as Secretary-at-War. A few days before he died Yonge was asked to give up his Vice-Treasurership for a pension on the Irish establishment (Newcastle to Yonge, July 26, 1755), and the Duke was soon enabled to give Egmont a hint that he could have the place.

⁵⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 22, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 241.

⁵¹ Fox to Hartington, July 16, 1755: Waldegrave, p. 160.

three ! Whether indeed Egmont's jealousy would induce him to take the opposite side ⁵² was yet to be revealed, but what was this double game that Leicester House was playing ?

The meeting with the Tory chief took place in due form and was, in effect, a fiasco. The vizier of the tiny court had nothing to say on the subject of the Treaties, but he refused to take any action without Pitt, to whom he professed the greatest attachment. He was subtle enough also to disparage the value of an alliance between Pitt and Lee, and craftily suggested a peerage for his son, which Newcastle said was for the time being impossible. There the matter ended except that His Lordship made excuses when it came to decision, and put the Duke off with such astute diplomacy that the latter felt satisfied with the interview. ⁵³

It was certainly a nest of intrigue that Pitt had chosen for his political abiding-place. The terms of his surrender were now obvious ; the price which he had paid had been the open rupture with the party of the King's son, now more and more hated. ⁵⁴ In other words it was a plain case of throwing over the Cumberlands in order to get the strength to embarrass Newcastle and force a passage into

⁵² Lee and Egmont were notably on bad terms.

⁵³ Newcastle to Stone, August 26, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32858, f. 294.

⁵⁴ Fox to Hartington, July 16, 1755. Cumberland's presence in the Regency was the point which most rankled in the mind of the Princess. Doubtless his success increased her antipathy.

office. The knights of Leicester House were masters of wiles and strategy, but it is doubtful if they ever penetrated the real transparency of Pitt's ambition. Fox told Rigby he might expect a session in Parliament such as he had never before seen, and a bustle that would suit even him.⁵⁵

The Secretary-at-War had more than one interest in the political world. When it dawned upon the minds of Ministers that Dorset was not the man to allay discontent in Ireland, it was difficult to find a successor without bringing upon them the Duke's displeasure. Thus most of the year 1754 had been spent in half-way measures.⁵⁶ But by December the strife had become so bitter that a change of lieutenants was felt to be imperative; and as the Duke of Devonshire had once held the lieutenancy with conspicuous success, it was but natural to think that his son might inherit his qualities and profit by his experience; while Hartington's friendship with Fox might be expected to keep the unmanageable Kildare in

⁵⁵ Rigby to Bedford, August 21, 1755, *Bedford Corres.* II. 166-8.

⁵⁶ It was at first decided to send a lord-deputy to straighten out the tangle, but when affairs in Ireland became for a time less troublesome, the Cabinet resolved to relinquish the idea; and the government was formally vested in three lords justices to act in Dorset's absence.—Minute of meeting, Newcastle House, April 9, 1754: Add. MSS., 32995, f. 209. Some months later the Duke of Marlborough revealed his ambition to succeed Dorset (see p. 189); but it was possible to postpone the settlement of the question until the following year, when Hartington was at last chosen as Dorset's successor.

partial order ⁵⁷—such were the chief motives for picking one of the Cumberlands.

The new lieutenant repaired to his troublesome charge in the early spring of 1755, accompanied by his secretary, Colonel Henry Seymour Conway. The months which immediately followed showed admirably the success of the new Viceroy's temper, but the constant cabals in the Irish House of Commons and the difficulty in reconciling the Speaker (Ponsonby) with the Primate brought Hartington to a determination to exert a freer hand; and to this intent he dispatched his secretary to prevail upon the Ministry to omit the Archbishop from the Board of Regency when next it should be named.

But no sooner had Conway fulfilled his mission and Newcastle persuaded the Primate to ask personally for his own sacrifice,⁵⁸ than Hartington became afraid of the decision he had taken, and suggested a lord deputy as a means of making the

⁵⁷ It was alleged that Fox, having Hartington under his influence, had intrigued to secure his appointment.—Emly MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report VIII, app., part 1, p. 179, a. If Fox indulged in any intrigues for this purpose, it was probably through his influence over his brother-in-law Kildare, who had ample opportunity of making so much trouble that the Ministry would be driven to appointing one of the Cumberlands. But however indirect Fox's efforts may have been, he had certainly much influence over the irresolute Hartington.

⁵⁸ Newcastle, in consenting to this measure, reveals his fear of the possible effect upon the Ministry if Parliament were to meet while Irish politics were in disorder.—Newcastle to Hartington, July 23, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 315.

removal unnecessary. The First Lord was, of course, quick to lay hold of the opportunity to avoid an act which might lose him his friendship with the Archbishop.

Kildare had already told Conway through Fox that the movement on the part of the Primate was all that he could have desired.⁵⁹ The Secretary was now beside himself with mortification and resentment, and persuaded both Devonshire and Fox to write the Marquis urging him to hold to his former resolution.⁶⁰ Fox had suspected all along that Newcastle and Hardwicke were on the watch for some serious blunder on the part of the Viceroy that would justify his recall; ⁶¹ but however true this may have been in theory, the Cumberlands being more than a match for their rivals in the Regency, the Marquis had been left pretty much to himself.

Fox's letter moved Hartington to reconsider his position and after an ineffectual attempt on the part of the Viceroy to make Kildare give up the Speaker, the Primate was eventually dropped from the Board.⁶²

On August 11 Ambassador Williams wrote that the convention with Russia had at last been concluded.⁶³ According to Fox, the Duke had sent

⁵⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 386-7.

⁶⁰ Rigby to Bedford, August 21, 1755: *Bedford Corres.* II. 165.

⁶¹ Fox to Ellis, June 2, 1755: Waldegrave, p. 158.

⁶² Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 388.

⁶³ Williams to Newcastle, August 11, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 102.

more money than the Regency had any idea of ; ⁶⁴ and the King was furious at the Ambassador for having expended so large a sum. ⁶⁵ But Sir Charles had speedily discovered that nothing but immense donations would induce the Great Chancellor to swing the Russian Court in his favour, and Newcastle had willingly abetted the Ambassador rather than abandon the very kernel of his foreign policy. Just to what extent the clever envoy distributed his bribes will probably never be known.

‘The subsidy’, wrote Doddington, who got it from Fox, ‘was £100,000 per annum for four years to hold in readiness 50 to 60,000 men, for which, when we employ them, we are to pay £100,000 per annum.’ ⁶⁶ Fox had added that he supposed similar ‘considerations’ would be offered to Bavaria and other states.

While Pitt was forging his weapons, to wield them with telling effect in the next session of Parliament, and Egmont, according to Fox, was waiting to consult his ally before committing Leicester House to either cause, it remains to be asked what policy the Cumberlands would pursue in the great question. Would they join hands with the party that ever regarded them as a menace and detested their royal champion, or would they endorse the

⁶⁴ Doddington, *Diary*, July 21, 1755.

⁶⁵ Holdernessee to Newcastle, August 29, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32858, f. 302.

⁶⁶ Doddington, *Diary*, August 18, 1755. The amount of the subsidy was £55,000.

plans of the Administration which they had successfully undermined from the time that Fox had pushed his way into the Cabinet, until a fleet received instructions that were likely to precipitate war? Excepting for the moment the frail chance that some might act from conviction simply, it was practically a question of balancing the dislike entertained for Leicester House against the contempt felt for Newcastle; but since the little Court at Kew⁶⁷ had too much at stake just then to give more than intimations of its feelings, the Cumberlands succumbed to the temptation of driving Newcastle still further into embarrassment and distress. The party might reasonably prophesy success. In 1754 they had made good their claims to take a share in the Government, and room being made for them they had virtually made the First Lord a servant of his Cabinet; now in the fullness of their victory the time was ripe for flinging him out of what little control he had.

The Duke of Devonshire sounded the key-note. On August 10 Fox had written to the Lord Lieutenant that his father was so rabid in his opposition to the Treaties that he was likely to attack them openly.⁶⁸ Before a week had passed the Duke had made good the expectation. The

⁶⁷ Country residence of the Prince of Wales, where he and his mother were now spending the summer.

⁶⁸ Fox to Hartington, August 10, 1755: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 531.

nation, said Devonshire, could not stand the expense of a naval war against France and support Hanover as well; the Electorate must take care of itself. The reason for the 'system', the Duke believed, was the subservience of the First Lord, who would not contradict the King in anything.⁶⁹

Such was the opinion of a statesman not to be despised. Whether or not the Marquis of Hartington shared his father's views was yet to be discovered. The Lord Lieutenant, though he inherited the integrity of his father, was not endowed with his insight or his courage, and constant difficulties in Ireland might well make him wish to keep the Administration at home in good humour; but to be on the safe side Newcastle determined to allow him *carte blanche* in his lieutenancy, in the hope of appeasing the family.⁷⁰ Woburn had long maintained an unbroken silence; yet Rigby expressed the hope that Legge would bring his opposition on to the floor of the Commons,⁷¹ and this was sufficient to signify that the Duke of Bedford was at least passively in sympathy with his party.⁷² As for Sandwich, he had become obsolete, and no one cared to learn what his views

⁶⁹ Doddington, *Diary*, August 18, 1755.

⁷⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 399.

⁷¹ Rigby to Bedford, August 21, 1755: *Bedford Corres.* II. 165.

⁷² We also learn that Pitt mentioned the subsidies to Bedford, who 'talked warmly and sensibly about them'. This discussion must have taken place some weeks later.—Doddington, *Diary*, September 2, 1755.

might be ; but Granville told the First Lord that there were countless men of prominence who were secretly against the Treaties, and opposed to any subsidy whatever.⁷³

The Duke of Cumberland would, of course, be watched with anxiety by both sides. Naturally he was privy to the intended policy of his party, and long ago was known to disapprove of a continental ' plan ', and a possible diversion from the maritime war. He was not of a nature to enjoy the products of diplomacy whether good or bad, and since it was not given him to bring on a continental war and resume his pleasant rôle of soldiering, he had satisfied himself with tempting France into hostilities on sea. When Fox had told him that the Duke of Newcastle in one of his wavering moods had expressed his preference for a naval war, His Royal Highness had laughed with unmeasured scorn, declaring that that was because the Duke ' could get nobody to take his money '.⁷⁴ Yet the leader of the Cumberlands seemed not as bitter as many of his party, while his extra-ministerial position put him above any personal interest in crowding out the Newcastles ; besides he had never shown in behalf of his faithful following the aggressive insistence of Bedford or Fox. But so far as the present programme was concerned His Royal Highness told the Secretary-at-War, in effect, that he

⁷³ Doddington, *Diary*, August 18, 1755.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, July 22, 1755.

regarded the subsidies distinctly in the light of a mistake, and that the nation would show extreme reluctance and dislike for them.⁷⁵ Being the son of the King, he could hardly do more than announce his opinions.

But what of Fox,—the forensic champion of the Cumberland interest, the politician to whom men would look for leadership in opposition or defence? Would he remain in the bosom of the Ministry and put the Treaties through the House of Commons, or would he cross the Rubicon and enter Opposition as leader of his party? Horace Walpole, the younger, writes that he had ‘dropped intimations of his dislike to the Treaties’;⁷⁶ and, if quoted correctly, he had clearly implied that the subsidy to Hesse was ‘weak and ruinous’.⁷⁷ When he and Doddington came to discuss the Russian Treaty some time later, Fox neither denied that the King of Prussia would refrain from an attack upon Hanover, nor allowed himself to be drawn into an argument for or against the ability of Russia to prevent it.⁷⁸ On the other hand, he wrote to Hartington only a short time before some comments that give us an inkling of his real notions: ‘We have made a treaty with Hesse and another with Russia, to be followed with other subsidies, or these will be useless; and if followed by other

⁷⁵ Doddington, *Diary*, August 18, 1755.

⁷⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 400.

⁷⁷ Page 306.

⁷⁸ Doddington, *Diary*, August 18, 1755.

subsidies, how can we find money to pay or place to assemble these troops? And perhaps, I may add, members to vote for them.'

Such comments certainly do not seem to be the result of partiality to subsidies; yet, on the other hand, they imply no resolution whatever. After touching upon Devonshire's opposition and Legge's avowed opinion, he writes further: 'I have been more cautious in giving, I may say in *forming* mine; but have by not singing it at the Cockpit, kept myself at liberty. Pitt's and Egmont's opinions in this regard, I don't know.'⁷⁹

Thus it is to be seen that Fox was playing a careful part. He was not an adept in foreign affairs, like his friend Bedford, and he was neither so independent nor so impulsive as Devonshire. It plainly had occurred to him that the subsidies were a heavy expense, and common sense convinced him that half-way measures of that sort would be useless. He was also quite aware that Newcastle would not be likely to stop at one or two, if he could help it, but might be calculated to devise a 'system' such as he had set on foot in the days when Pelham had suffered him to harass the Court of Vienna. Yet Fox was willing to let others battle with such problems. His own sphere was essentially the House of Commons and its various features. If his professional services were valuable

⁷⁹ Fox to Hartington, August 10, 1755: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 531. Evidently Fox had not heard the details of Pitt's interview with Hardwicke.

to any party, then he would form his decision on subsidies and fix the price ; and as far as political ties were concerned, the Cumberlands were after all but an association to embarrass Newcastle, and in Fox's mind a means of making himself a power. For these reasons the Secretary-at-War was 'cautious in forming his opinion'.

Thus it may be seen that the party of Cumberland, with more or less enthusiasm according to the several natures of its members, was oddly enough arrayed on common ground with the Pitt-Leicester-House coalition in opposition to the Administration. Hardwicke advised Newcastle that he was 'credibly informed' of a cabal in the Commons against the subsidies, and that 'Mr. Fox is secretly in it'. Evidently the Ministry was painfully conscious of the dangerous unity which a popular cry might effect even between mutually hostile factions—but the Secretary-at-War had still kept them guessing.

Shortly after this the Lord President made an appointment with the First Minister on the plea of important disclosures respecting the House of Commons, and the following day, August 20, the interview took place. Granville informed the Duke that the opponents of the subsidies intended to attack them on the first day, taking a handle from the address to the King. In the front rank would be Pitt and Legge, while Egmont and Lee would probably concur ; and in fact the latter had already condemned the Ministry's 'system', although Granville had done his best in its defence.

His Lordship then came to the motive of the interview. Fox must be satisfied or he would go into opposition. The latter had been with him twice lately, and had said that Egmont would not accept the intended overture, and Pitt (this, Newcastle inferred, had come from Fox) would never become reconciled to the First Lord, as that would be incompatible with Legge's inevitable dismissal. Fox spoke also of the opposition his party was plotting, but declared that he 'had hitherto kept himself free and would do so till the time came nearer'. What he wished was to become Newcastle's lieutenant, and Granville added that he believed his friend would give up every other consideration for the sake of the Duke.

Newcastle must have been astonished, to say the least, at this tale, which in writing of it he described as 'extraordinary'. He told Granville it was impossible for Fox, in view of his 'higher connexions', ever to be his 'lieutenant', and he could not regard him in that light; he wanted no 'lieutenant' who would be a 'general' over him—this, no doubt, with a wince at the recollection of the War Party.

To this the smooth-tongued statesman replied that the House of Commons would certainly force him to employ one, and then—as though to emphasize the crisis—he added that Fox had told him that he had not signed the orders for the ratification of the Hessian Treaty, and that, as Legge's act had been immensely popular, this new stroke

of Fox's had the same end in view. At the close of the interview the Earl proposed significantly, and in fact insisted long upon it, that Secretary Robinson should be removed to the House of Lords.

Newcastle's opinion of the episode was that Fox feared the effect which the negotiations with Pitt and Egmont would have upon his own value, and had enlisted Granville to make the best bargain he could for him. 'The *succedaneum*,' was the Duke's comment, 'can never take place.'⁸⁰

Fox, however, in a letter to Hartington throws very different light upon the subject. 'The Duke of Newcastle,' he wrote, 'told a friend of mine that he had an overture from me by Lord Granville, which is not true ; but His Grace might perhaps, from what Lord Granville said, conclude it came from me.'⁸¹

Was it, or was it not an overture ? In other words, was Fox telling the truth ? It would seem from this letter that he was in no sense indignant at his friend's efforts on his behalf, but had not in any way authorized them. He was no doubt quite ready at this time to consider terms, and of course he may have been taking care to delude Hartington and other members of the party until the transaction was done ; there is also the possi-

⁸⁰ Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 22, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 241.

⁸¹ Fox to Hartington, September 1, 1755: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 534.

bility that he had dropped informally certain hints to Granville, which he secretly hoped the latter would carry further. Yet, on the other hand, it is quite possible that the Lord President was of his own accord speaking on behalf of one whose accession to the 'inner clique' would be a pleasing contrast to ministers whom the old diplomat could not but regard with contempt. 'My Lord Granville,' said Fox to Doddington two days before the Earl became his advocate, 'told the Duke of Newcastle that he would be served himself as he and his brother had served him.' The remark had been flung out by Fox in a discussion of the Treaties.⁸²

The wary Lord Chancellor was quite in accord with Newcastle's view of the colloquy, but he felt that overtures from the Cumberland quarter should be treated with civility,—'so far keep them alive.' He did not believe Fox would go into opposition, since it would ruin him; and he sniffed at his omission to sign the order for the ratification, which he attributed to the fact that the 'lower end of the table' were frequently ignored.⁸³

Fox was meanwhile watching events with sharp unerring eye. He had dined with some of the

⁸² Page 320.

⁸³ 'I fancy', added the Chancellor, 'he will hardly boast of *that*, when the King comes over.'—Hardwicke to Newcastle, August 23, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 259. Fox had certainly not 'boasted' of the fact in his letter to Hartington, but he was doubtless aware that he had a trump card to play, if he ever should desire to play it.

Prince's servants, including Stone, one evening,⁸⁴ and doubtless picked up some valuable bits of news from the table-talk. At any rate he kept himself constantly informed of all the gossip that was current, and imagined that the First Lord wished to secure him, through Cumberland's mediation.⁸⁵ Pitt, he knew, would be solicited again, but Legge was reported as saying that the Paymaster was 'in no disposition to be paid with such counters as His Grace had to give him'. 'I think,' wrote Fox to Hartington, 'he (Newcastle) told your father that the Russian Treaty was not *done* yet—he must mean "ratified", which is an equivocation; but he told Pitt absolutely that he knew of no other but the Hessian, which was to my knowledge an absolute falsehood.'⁸⁶

The same day Newcastle wrote a letter in great perturbation to Chief Justice Ryder. It seems that Fox desired to bring his nephew, Harry Digby, into Parliament for a borough that Ryder had been intending for his son. The Secretary-at-War, who regarded Newcastle much as one thief looks upon another, refused to accept the excuse that the

⁸⁴ Stone to Newcastle, August 18, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 197.

⁸⁵ Fox to Hartington, August 29, 1755: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 532.

⁸⁶ Fox to Hartington, September 1, 1755: *ibid.* II. 534. If Newcastle made this statement to Pitt, it must have been in a private message, as the Duke did not see him until the notable interview of September 2. But the natural supposition is that Fox was misinformed.

Duke's interest in the constituency was derived entirely from the Chief Justice, and insisted that 'the case of Tiverton was the case of every Cornish borough'.⁸⁷ The First Lord, who was worried nearly to a state of collapse over the situation in the political world, was too fearful of consequences to allow Fox a motive for ill-humour, so he signified his surrender by asking Ryder to write his willingness to relinquish the project.⁸⁸

In the meantime the Duke was preparing for his long-awaited struggle with the Paymaster. Much had happened since the overtures through Hardwicke—much that must certainly have rendered Pitt's services more marketable. While at home the defection of Lee and the busy intrigues of Fox and Egmont gave the Duke's projected 'system' every evidence of failure, abroad the defeat of Braddock and the definitive breach with Austria must have strengthened the suspicion that the Ministry was tottering. More than all, the War Party, coercive and triumphant, were threatening to join the Princess in an organized resistance. Yet if only Pitt could be induced to tender his assistance the Ministry might be saved!

The meeting was originally designed for an earlier

⁸⁷ That is, under Crown patronage, and hence at the disposal of the First Lord.

⁸⁸ Newcastle to Ryder, September 1, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 386. However much Fox may have been pacified, the request was apparently refused, as the son of the Chief Justice was eventually returned for Tiverton.—*Parliamentary History*, XV. 300.

date, but Cresset had asked to have it deferred, and Newcastle had hoped that signified some helpful promptings from Leicester House.⁸⁹ But the Duke dreaded the interview as though it were the plague, repeatedly hinting that he needed the Chancellor's personal encouragement; while the latter continued nevertheless to enjoy his well-earned recreation, not a little pleased, perhaps, to see his friend attempt the task which at least two emissaries had undertaken for him. 'It will be a most disagreeable conference,' wrote Newcastle to Holderness, 'but there is no help for it;'⁹⁰ while to Hartington, with whom he corresponded regularly on Irish business, he opened his heart much as though it were a swan-song he was penning, remarking among other things, 'I can go out and *easily*, but not be a cipher in office.'⁹¹ The Duke of Newcastle was not a cipher, but as to the former statement—alas, if he could but have seen himself through others' eyes!

On the evening of the 2nd of September Newcastle received his expected visitor and they talked for two hours and a half without interruption. Like Hardwicke, the Duke began first to discuss Pitt's own position and prospects,⁹² and ended with the offer which Pitt had desired in April—'the

⁸⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 22, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 241.

⁹⁰ Newcastle to Holderness, August 29, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 329.

⁹¹ Newcastle to Hartington, August 30, 1755: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 532.

⁹² It is amusing to read how the Duke quibbled over the word 'designation' until Pitt caught him up and exposed the bluff.

King's countenance', with the addition of a seat in the Cabinet Council.

But stress of circumstances had made the Paymaster a very different person from the neglected genius who had yearned for recognition in the spring, and the price of his services proved proportionately higher. He gave his host distinctly to understand that he 'could not and would not take an *active part* in the House of Commons, unless he had an office of advice as well as of execution'; he 'would not, like a lawyer, talk from a brief'. The Lower House, in his opinion, was but an 'assembly of atoms'; the 'great wheels of the machine were stopped';⁹³ and no mere seat in the Cabinet (so he had said) would enable him to act with efficiency. He then added that whereas the Duke did not know the House of Commons, he 'might say without vanity that he did better than anybody';⁹⁴ and that what it most needed was the presence of a minister who should be the direct avenue of business between the Commons and the King. It was Legge's old idea resuscitated!

⁹³ According to his own account, as given by Doddington, Pitt told Newcastle that 'his system of carrying on the business of the House of Commons would not do'. This was a censure of the mongrel 'system' which we have noticed for the session of 1754-5, and which had not yet been altered, in so far as there was still no recognized leader in the House.

⁹⁴ Hardwicke, who was not unskilful in reading character, had advised his friend to flatter Pitt with respect to his abilities in the Commons; but it would seem that the latter made it impossible. Newcastle may well have thought of Fox's abilities, but he made no answer to the conceit.

Pitt then grew bolder as he became animated on the subject. He actually told his host that he should 'give up some of his sole power'; but when the latter denied the existence of such 'sole power', the Paymaster assured him that he approved of a peer in the Treasury, but hinted that other officers must receive their proper support. This reminded him of Legge, whom he praised in the most superlative degree, entirely justifying his conduct; ill-usage, he said, had made him the favourite of the Commons.⁹⁵ Finally, upon a reference to the Seals, he told the Duke that since the King liked his Secretaries too well to remove them (with compensation elsewhere), that fact in itself must decide him against taking an active part in the Commons.

This should surely have been sufficient; but Newcastle was fain to take up the Treaties, and adduced all the arguments of which his shallow brain could think. But Pitt was violent in his disapprobation, ridiculing the Hessian Treaty in particular, whereas the Russian could be justified only in time of peace. He would support the former⁹⁶ if it would put an effectual stop to others, but would not support a whole system of treaties;⁹⁷

⁹⁵ He spoke of him as the 'child of the Whigs'.

⁹⁶ 'As a mark (thus runs Pitt's account) of the affection of a ruined nation for the honour of its King, who had entered into a rash engagement'.

⁹⁷ Pitt, according to his own version, went so far as to suggest *paying* the Czarina and the Landgrave of Hesse to let their engagements fall through, adding, 'Where would be the

and if Devonshire should oppose them in the Lords, he would echo him in the Lower House. Against this tirade the Duke of Newcastle only wasted his breath, and after persuading Pitt to agree to a second meeting, at Powis House,⁹⁸ the conference ended.⁹⁹ The Duke was satisfied with his visitor's civility, but got no hope of any change in his resolution.

Three alternatives occurred to the First Lord, as he wrote next day to his 'oracle'. He might resign and let Fox succeed him at the head of the Administration—that is, 'yield to the cabal';¹⁰⁰ he might remain, with Pitt as Secretary and Legge in his present post; or he might accept Fox's overtures, and expect others to help with their support.¹⁰¹

'To give all the answers,' replied Hardwicke, 'which naturally occur to his (Pitt's) ill-founded objections, would exhaust the language.' The Chancellor decided that the Paymaster was even haughtier than when he (Hardwicke) had talked with him, and suspected that he was, in plain harm of it? It is odd that Newcastle makes no mention of this singular proposal.

⁹⁸ The Chancellor's town-house.

⁹⁹ The two authorities for the interview are Newcastle's letter to Hardwicke, September 3, 1755, and Doddington, *Diary*, September 3, 1755. Walpole's brief report of it is hardly worthy of notice.

¹⁰⁰ In other words, to the Cumberland Party and its adherents.

¹⁰¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 3, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 408.

English, teasing Newcastle for the Seals. If a promise, then, could be secured from the King, that alone, he believed, would be sufficient to make Pitt perform 'an active part'. As for the issue, the first alternative, he continued, would be criticized as a 'second resignation' in a time of great distress,¹⁰² and would moreover be flinging Fox at the King without giving him any choice in the matter; the second must be obnoxious to the King, must weaken Newcastle's own position, and give a chance for Pitt to make unpleasant remarks on the former transaction with Fox;¹⁰³ but of the last proposition which the Duke mentioned the Chancellor approved thoroughly. Fox had a party, a patron and the personal inclination of the King. Pitt could not boast of any party, or any support at Court, and had the aversion of the King; and an additional advantage of getting the Secretary-at-War would be his unpopularity with Leicester House.¹⁰⁴ It might seem that the Chancellor felt that the Princess would have her deserts.

Two more meetings with Pitt took place, but both quite in vain. Newcastle was unable to persuade himself that he ought to ask for the Seals from the King,¹⁰⁵ and Pitt finally rested his ultimatum on his objections to the Russian Treaty

¹⁰² The first one was in 1745 during the Jacobite rebellion.

¹⁰³ An allusion to the perfidy of March, 1754.

¹⁰⁴ Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 4, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 442.

¹⁰⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 6, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 5.

and (a new obstacle) on his unwillingness to act with Fox.¹⁰⁶ As the Secretary-at-War could not very well be told that he must be silent or go into opposition, merely because the Paymaster would support the Administration, the second objection was manifestly ridiculous. Pitt had expressed much the same notion to Doddington on the night of the interview. After giving him a detailed account of the Duke's overture, and discussing all possible material for the campaign in the Commons, he finally took occasion to state his objection to Fox, of whom he had nothing to complain; but since he was not *sui juris* (alluding to the Cumberland interests), Pitt could not act with him, besides Fox was intimate with his greatest enemies: Granville, Stone, and Murray.¹⁰⁷

The Duke of Newcastle was now driven to adopt his 'third alternative', which Hardwicke had advised and which necessity seemed to require. In some ways Fox was the last man he would have wished to enlist. The party which he had so much reason to fear, and which had lately shattered his ascendancy in the Cabinet, might more than ever intrude its opinions upon the Government; and, even though the King had at last returned from Hanover (thus bringing the Council of Regency to an end), the Ministry would be no more secure

¹⁰⁶ Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 15, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 86. Conscious of his failure, Pitt was probably intentionally widening the breach.

¹⁰⁷ Doddington, *Diary*, September 3, 1755.

if the leadership were transferred from Cumberland to his most faithful supporter. Yet, on the other hand, if Fox should accept the management of the Commons, and of necessity the defence of the Treaties, that very faction which he dreaded might be split up, or better still, might be assimilated into the Administration. Whether this advantage occurred to the Duke at the time is extremely doubtful, but he certainly knew that Fox, if united with Pitt in opposition, would almost inevitably wreck his measures and bring about his fall ; for no one save Murray—and he a man of little courage—could be depended upon to keep the Commons in obedience. Thus the salvation of his policy and his power was in the hands of the orator of the Cumberlands.

Fox, for his part, was readily accessible. Whether he had authorized Granville or not, he did not deny the story to the Newcastles ; and though one may argue that it was not his duty to drive home every bit of gossip that arose from the recesses of Claremont,¹⁰⁸ it was truly unnatural for him willingly to remain in a false position. The fact seems obvious that he accepted the Lord President's campaigning as a good stroke of politics, and waited only for the word that would make him master of the situation. How dearly he paid for the speculation will be shown in the next chapter.

Ten years' experience and adroit counsel had

¹⁰⁸ The Duke of Newcastle's country-house.

made Fox an exceedingly efficient Secretary-at-War. His several speeches on military questions show the insight which he possessed into more than one feature of his department ; and his genius for management as well as his characteristic energy gave the War Office a stimulus that showed itself notably in the prompt measures against the French in America. Nor must it be considered that a Secretary-at-War has necessarily an insignificant position, merely because he is not as a rule in the vanguard of the Ministry. In Fox's case it might be almost said that the War Office was the storehouse of his power and that of the Cumberland party. If the association of the Commoner and His Royal Highness were mutually profitable, there was also in that unity a considerable power. While the Duke could feel that his military projects would not lack punctual execution, his redoubtable friend was enabled to exert an unlimited influence in the matter of preferment ; in other words, Fox was practically an autocrat in military patronage,¹⁰⁹ and he who is chief in one sphere of government is not a cipher in others. All of this helped the Cumberlands to become what they were—a loosely-bound, but always influential, and sometimes dominant faction in the State. Would it appear strange, then, if Fox, the artful corruptionist, and the staunch supporter of Cumberland, should hesitate to yield such effective machinery into another's hands ?

¹⁰⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 401.

And yet he did not waver. Stone and Granville were the mediators selected to entrap him—the latter ‘at once the victim, the creature, and the scourge of the Duke of Newcastle’. In a moment of doubt and fear the ‘aspen Duke’ offered to make way for the Earl himself, who laughingly replied that he was ‘not fit to be First Minister’.¹¹⁰ He next offered to resign, but the King had not forgotten 1745 and would not hear of it.¹¹¹ Yet Granville’s sneer may have suddenly put the Duke on his mettle; at all events, when the Lord President proposed that Fox should have the Exchequer, he was apprehensive of having the Secretary-at-War in a relationship so close and possibly dangerous to his power, and answered His Lordship that in that case they would never agree a fortnight.¹¹² No, he would abandon that mongrel system he had adopted hitherto and give Fox the sole Leadership of the House of Commons.

The 20th to the 22nd was largely taken up in meetings between the tempters and the tempted. At the first interview (on the 20th) Fox remarked, ‘My Lord, is it not fit that this should be the last time we should meet to try to agree?’

‘Yes,’ agreed the Duke, ‘I think it is.’

¹¹⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 402.

¹¹¹ Newcastle to Lady Katherine Pelham, September 26, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 219.

¹¹² ‘They quarrelled about it’, wrote Fox. ‘I gave readily in to the Duke of Newcastle’s opinion.’—Fox to Hartington, September 23, 1755: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 535.

‘Then,’ said Fox, ‘If Your Grace thinks so, it shall be so.’¹¹³

The next day Newcastle wrote to his new convert, Hartington, that he and the Chancellor would do all they could to arrange a settlement with the Secretary-at-War, and ‘act in the utmost consent and confidence with him’.¹¹⁴ They could not as a matter of fact help themselves. Fox was perfectly aware that the scales were in his favour, and he soon proved himself in no wise as tractable as the Duke had expected. Whereas he was only too glad to accept the management of the Commons—upon the terms, it must be admitted, that he had refused eighteen months before—he insisted upon a special mark of favour from the King, which he chose to translate as the seals of the Secretary of State.¹¹⁵ Obviously the terms called for more concession than the Newcastles had been prepared to make.

Upon one point, however, the Duke felt that he must quiet his mind before his final acceptance. Fox had said they ‘must stand or fall together’; this sounded very assuring, and yet was it not wise to make certain that such unity would be real?

¹¹³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 402. ‘I told the Duke of Newcastle’, wrote Fox to Hartington (September 23) ‘that this was the last time I would ever come to see if we could agree. And so it is.’

¹¹⁴ Newcastle to Hartington, September 20, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 158.

¹¹⁵ Newcastle to Hartington, September 22, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 183.

Newcastle persuaded himself that the King was Fox's only chance of acquiring power outside the Ministry, and His Majesty must repeat the assurance he had given last December.¹¹⁶

Now the King had always liked Fox, but he was essentially a man who admired a force that was greater than his own. The late Queen and the Earl of Orford had both succeeded in impressing themselves upon the man who wore the crown, and he let them govern him, because they knew how to do it without hurting his vanity. Granville, in a later day, became almost his idol, although it is true that the influence he exerted was of quite another sort. But when even Granville degenerated into political subservience, his power in the Closet became noticeably lessened. So it may have been with Fox. The King knew to what Newcastle's abilities amounted, and he could see that Fox was willing to lower the strength of his real character by submission to a man whom he might have ruined; he may have believed also that his son's party was no longer to be the weighty factor in the mind of the ambitious Secretary-at-War, and he realized that the Duke of Newcastle would never willingly consent to allow the Cumberlands to become masters.

Accordingly when the First Lord informed him what Fox had said, the King replied, 'He may very well fall without *you*;' and Newcastle was in ecstasies at the further assurance that Fox should do

¹¹⁶ Newcastle to Lady K. Pelham, September 26, 1755.

nothing—even in the House of Commons—without the previous sanction of the First Minister. All this the Duke was capable of exaggerating, when he wrote about it afterwards to his sister-in-law; but he felt untold satisfaction. ‘He has an office,’ he declared, ‘which the King told me he would do ill in.’¹¹⁷ He can seldom see the King without My Lord Holderness. He is removed from the Secretary of (*sic*) War, and so far removed from the Duke. But above all it has given me an opportunity to show the world that the King would put into that office (as he has done) the man the most declared friend of mine, *My Lord Barrington*, without consulting the Duke.’¹¹⁸ The Duke of Newcastle may have felt that his treatment at the hands of the chieftain of the Cumberlands was amply revenged.

Meanwhile Granville had been banished from his agreeable rôle as being ‘too warm’,¹¹⁹ and Newcastle determined to try his hand alone at driving the bargain, while poor Waldegrave, who happened to have an unenviable reputation for expertness in diplomacy of this sort, was persuaded to be present. The final meeting (which was a very long one) took place apparently on the 22nd, and the Duke, finding the master of the War Office fixed

¹¹⁷ This might be regarded as a rather interesting *exposé* of Newcastle’s attitude toward the filling of high offices of state.

¹¹⁸ Newcastle to Lady K. Pelham, September 26, 1755. We can see how complete was Newcastle’s intention of circumscribing Fox’s power.

¹¹⁹ Newcastle to Hartington, September 20, 1755.

in his determination, accepted the conditions.¹²⁰ Fox also mentioned the names of five persons whom he wished to receive preferment; ¹²¹ after which the Duke and his obliging friend went their way.

Thus Fox became by designation Secretary of State, displacing Sir Thomas Robinson, who would return to his old post in the Bedchamber, with an added pension of £2,000 on the Irish establishment as a salve to his feelings. Barrington, who had been Master of the Wardrobe during Sir Thomas's sojourn in the Ministry, was named as the future Secretary-at-War; and Fox, on hearing of the nomination, had written to Newcastle that he believed Cumberland would give the Viscount as decent a reception as he could 'reasonably desire'.¹²² The prediction was not only fulfilled, but was actually realized through Fox's own efforts. Barrington allowed the present Secretary-at-War to present his respects to His Royal Highness, while both men promised to receive the prospective occupant 'very civilly', and the Duke went so far as to say that he had no choice of his own for the office, even if it had been left to him.¹²³ The pacification of his ducal patron was Fox's first bit of politics for his new friends.

¹²⁰ Newcastle to Hartington, September 22 and 25, 1754: Add. MSS., 32859, ff. 183, 201.

¹²¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 402.

¹²² Fox to Newcastle, September 20, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 255. Barrington, as also Robinson and Fox, would not come formally into possession of his new post until November.

¹²³ Barrington to Newcastle, September 27, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 246.

To promise the furtherance of the Treaties was of course unnecessary, but Fox took occasion to tell the King in an audience on the 23rd that he was for them, whether in or out of office.¹²⁴ Granville had told His Majesty previously that he could not speak for his friend's views, and obviously for the reason that Fox had been reserving his decision till the time should come for him to act. The latter now assured Hartington that he would defend them upon any consideration, 'and in the act of vindicating the measure, declare war on the Minister'.¹²⁵

Meanwhile the Ministry sorely needed vindication. In August had come the news of Braddock's defeat and the utter collapse of the chief expedition sent out in 1754; while its result as far as the Administration was concerned was to make it all the more in need of capable reinforcement. Hardwicke had thought that this disaster had induced Pitt to raise his terms in the conference with Newcastle the first week in September;¹²⁶ and its effect upon people in general was inevitably to

¹²⁴ Fox to Hartington, September 23, 1755: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 535. Fox expressed his approval of the Russian Treaty on the ground that it was a 'preventative measure'.—Newcastle to Hartington, September 25, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 201.

¹²⁵ Fox to Hartington, September 23, 1755. Possibly Fox was trying to cover the discomfiture he felt in having deserted to the enemy of the Cumberlands. His declaration is absurd as it stands.

¹²⁶ Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 4, 1755: Add. MSS., 32858, f. 442.

increase their hostility to a system of subsidies which would divert attention from the Colonies. In the meantime, as we have taken occasion to note, the long-desired return of His Majesty had terminated the dominance of the War Party in the administration of foreign affairs, and the Duke of Newcastle was again supreme. With Cumberland's power at an end, and Fox an apostle of the Newcastle system, the situation roughly consisted in an established policy of aggression from which there was no turning back save by concession, with an administration that had neither the ability nor the hardihood to gain profit from the Cumberlands' ill-advised legacy. In other matters the Ministry was swayed by its optimism. The Hanoverian problem had received the Newcastle solution, and diplomatic entrenchments were raised around the dreaded man at Berlin. Early in the autumn Frederick had manifested some willingness to draw closer to the court of his uncle,¹²⁷ but the English Ministry was not inclined to be diverted from the policy already established, and some indirect correspondence led to no tangible results. It was diplomatic coquetry and little else. Frederick dared not hazard a rupture with Louis XV (with whom he was still in alliance) unless perfectly assured of an adequate compensation; and as the Duc de Nivernais was expected soon to arrive in Berlin, a renewal of the Franco-

¹²⁷ Frederick to Michel, September 23, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 193.

Prussian alliance (very soon to expire) was eminently probable. Meanwhile the English Ministry had no interest in letting the Russian Treaty appear as a mistake, on the eve of a session of Parliament.

How far Fox could prevail upon his party to follow his lead was a question. Hartington had already surrendered to the Treaties, but Chatsworth was supposed to be still on the war-path, and Woburn was ominously silent. To the Marquis, Fox wrote that the King deplored the Duke of Devonshire's ultimatum, and the son set about painting the Russian Treaty in the brightest colours possible; in the meantime the Duke of Newcastle was immensely pleased with himself and his chosen Secretary. To his Scottish friend, the Duke of Argyll, he wrote that he felt persuaded that the arrangement would be lasting;¹²⁸ while in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant he declared, 'We are both satisfied with each other at present, and I doubt not but we shall continue to be so. It seems the resolution and intention of both parties.'¹²⁹ All this appeared very roseate; but Chesterfield's prophetic irony came pretty near the truth, when he remarked, 'The Duke of Newcastle

¹²⁸ Newcastle to Argyll, September 27, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 237.

¹²⁹ Newcastle to Hartington, September 30, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 281. In a previous letter (September 25) he had written, 'Your friend Fox and I (I hope) are determined to be good friends to each other. We are now engaged in the same cause and in the same bottom.' The slight doubt expressed by 'I hope' has now disappeared.

has turned out every one else, and now he has turned out himself.' ¹³⁰

In violent contrast to the satisfaction of the First Lord was the wrath of Leicester House on hearing the news. As soon as the Princess extracted the details from Cresset, she was almost beside herself with anger, ¹³¹ and her secretary deduced that, while she would not oppose the King's measures herself, she would make no effort whatever to instil obedience in her servants. Such a threat was only too likely to be sincere; and Newcastle wrote in one of his 'weekly journals' to the Chancellor that Lee had declared that he 'could not act with' Fox, and that Egmont, while more conciliatory than his rival, was unwilling to 'come in *alone*' ¹³²—a reservation that was no doubt perfectly safe.

The truth of the matter was—although Newcastle shut his eyes to it—that the attitude of Egmont and Lee was but a replica of the Princess's own feelings. Hardwicke declared keenly that she had only herself to blame for the elevation of Fox, since she had steadily declined

¹³⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 403.

¹³¹ She declared that she was *maltraitée*; and added that whereas she had once been under some obligations to Newcastle, now '*nous sommes quits*'.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, September 28, 1755: Add. MSS., 35414, f. 80. 'In short,' concluded the Duke, in relating the scene as he had heard it, 'rage and fury appeared through the whole.'—*Ibid*.

¹³² Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1755: Add. MSS., 32860, f. 13. He seems to have referred to Pitt.

to use her influence with Pitt.¹³³ But the King showed more shrewdness than any of them when he observed, 'The Princess is angry with Fox only for being against the Regency Act; and he was right (added the Sovereign) to be for my son rather than (for) her.'¹³⁴ The Lord President had also an insight into the situation; and whereas he had congratulated the First Lord that with Fox's accession the dangers were now past,¹³⁵ still it would be far from wise to begin the new session with a proselyte of Leicester House in the Treasury; and since Legge had refused to resign of his own accord,¹³⁶ it was Granville's opinion—which Lady Yarmouth persistently echoed—that an example should be made of him.¹³⁷ The King told Newcastle frankly that His Grace was wanting in spirit, and the Countess assured the monarch that the Duke was solely responsible for the ministerial apathy.¹³⁸

¹³³ Hardwicke expressed a wish that the King might be induced to reassure her, and suggested that at least Granville should be sent to calm her temper.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, September 29, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 263. The Duke eventually sent Munckhausen, who was civilly received, but when he endeavoured to explain the necessity of Fox's promotion, she 'put off the discourse'.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 4, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 357.

¹³⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1755.

¹³⁵ Granville to Newcastle, September 25, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 208.

¹³⁶ Walpole to Mann, September 29, 1755: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, II. 347.

¹³⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1755.

¹³⁸ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 18, 1755: Add. MSS., 32860, f. 86.

Yet the First Lord, perhaps because he had still a lurking fear of its effect upon the nation, plainly hesitated to take positive measures against the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who for more than a year had been proscribed, but never had been in danger ; and when he did talk vigorous language, it was because he feared that Granville would say that his jealousy had withheld the office from Fox.¹³⁹ Dupplin, he finally concluded, would be his first choice, now that Lee was out of the question,¹⁴⁰ and the former could be conveniently disposed of at the end of the session.¹⁴¹ The shifting and transplanting of his numerous parasites was never a hard problem.

The Chancellor generally reflected more broadly than his friend, but he seldom gave his advice save when it was solicited, and he had to depend for most of his information on the First Lord. He agreed with Granville that 'examples should be made', though, with characteristic procrastination, he would put off the evil day till Parliament opened—advice which was eagerly accepted. Meanwhile His Lordship saw clearly the advantage of decimating their enemies, and favoured Egmont (who he believed would be willing to act with Fox)

¹³⁹ Granville, as we have seen, had suggested this office for Fox.

¹⁴⁰ Pitt had 'bit him to the bone' was the way the Chancellor expressed himself.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 13, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 30.

¹⁴¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1755.

rather than a man like Dupplin, whom the Opposition would malign as an 'absolute fool'.¹⁴²

Seemingly the greatest comfort of the First Lord was the King's attitude toward the prospective Secretary of State. Abreu, the Spanish ambassador, had written to his court that the new chief of the department of the South would be in all things subservient to the *Conciliabulum*, as Granville had dubbed the 'inner clique';¹⁴³ and Newcastle noticed that his ingenuity—for there is little doubt that he instigated the letter—met with marked approval in the Closet. 'I am glad,' said the King on hearing of it. 'I told Fox that the Ministry had brought him in, that if he did not behave well, they would quarrel with him, and so should I too. Fox is not popular.' Whereupon the First Lord eagerly depicted the dislike which the City felt for the Secretary-at-War. Yet Fox was not the only one out of favour with His Majesty. When the Ministers asked Lady Yarmouth if there was any hope of his recognizing Pitt when the latter came to Court, Her Ladyship made it clear that the King had spoken of him in terms so scurrilous that Newcastle made an emphatic dash of omission in his letter relating the episode.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 13, 1755.

¹⁴³ Fox's Memoirs, *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 4, 1755. The episode is specially worthy of note in view of the tendency of some writers to underestimate the King's hatred of Pitt and overestimate Newcastle's desire to blacken him. It was about this

Certainly the King felt a hatred for Pitt that he never would feel for his rival.

While the Newcastles were intrenching themselves in the Closet, Fox was not idle in the furtherance of 'the cause'. It was decided that he should not enter his new office till after the address was voted in the House of Commons, since the promotion entailed his standing for re-election, and just as all his time was required now, so also his presence would be demanded later, to ensure a good impression for the Administration on the opening day.¹⁴⁵ With this end in view he penned the usual circular to members of the Commons upon whom he thought he could depend, but made it of rather more personal a character than was customary,¹⁴⁶ being determined that all over whom he had the remotest influence should

time that the Duke also heard (from Granville) of the rupture between the two Commoners in May. Hardwicke, on receiving the account, remarked that it was 'curious, and quite in *one* (of them)'s style'.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 13, 1755.

¹⁴⁵ Robinson to Carlisle, October 2, 1755: Carlisle MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report V, app. 6, p. 209; Walpole, *Memoirs*, II. 419.

¹⁴⁶ The letter, as given by Walpole (*ibid.*, pp. 420–1) ran as follows: 'Sir,—The King has declared his intention to make me Secretary of State, and I (very unworthy as I fear I am of such an undertaking) must take upon me the conduct of the House of Commons. I cannot therefore well accept the office till after the first day's debate, which may be a warm one. A great attendance that day of my friends will be of the greatest consequence to my future situation, and I should be extremely happy if you would for that reason show yourself among them,' to the great honour of ' &c. &c.

if possible attend on the day of the Address. Newcastle felt a moment's distrust of the expression 'to have the conduct of the House of Commons', but he had to admit that Fox's behaviour at present was above reproach, in which opinion the chief of the Admiralty concurred.¹⁴⁷ When, however, the letter was recited to Newcastle under somewhat unfavourable circumstances, the suspicious words seemed to ring with sinister designs; and the Chancellor, who was sure there was a 'meaning in it', declared that 'there had been times in which such circulars, he believed, would have been brought before the House.'¹⁴⁸ In very truth these two were mortally afraid of the very man whom they had engaged to terrify others.

Leicester House was quick to see an opening in any slip on the part of its enemies, and Lee forth-

¹⁴⁷ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 4, 1755. The only apparent reason why the words '*to have the conduct of the House of Commons*' should have evoked suspicion was its juxtaposition in the letter to the announcement of the King's intention. The 'conduct' or management of the House was never delegated by the King, but by the controlling influence in the Cabinet. But 'conduct' could hardly be more objectionable than the usual expression 'lead'—that is, to have the 'lead' in the Commons. It is more than possible, however, that Newcastle himself feared that the new manager was giving the Commons the impression that he was to have entire authority in the disposition of employments and the use of the secret-service money, which, as the King once said (Walpole, *Memoirs*, I. 335), had always been exclusively in the hands of the First Lord of the Treasury. But Hardwicke's objection was more likely the one we mentioned first.

¹⁴⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 13, 1755.

with attacked Fox not only for the 'presumptuous letter', but also for having forced upon the King the payment of an exorbitant pension 'to remove the honestest, best and ablest man', &c. This was said to his friend Hume Campbell, who failed to shake him in his opinion. But the King was more reasonable—or else he was biassed by every token of rebellion from his daughter-in-law—and declared it 'nonsense . . . Fox might be attacked for his letter, if it was an indiscreet one, . . . but could not be attacked for coming into office before he had done anything.'¹⁴⁹ But these were ominous weeks, and no one realized this so much as the Duke of Newcastle.

Fox was indeed so much in the spirit of winning recruits that he even wrote to Legge, asking him if he would consent, as a favour, to preside at the Cockpit,¹⁵⁰ where the Ministry's well-trained majority were usually called together to learn their catechism the night before the opening of a session. But Newcastle was too bitter against his Chancellor of the Exchequer to think very favourably of the artifice,¹⁵¹ and Legge was too shrewd to be entrapped.

Frustrated in his aim of confounding the Oppo-

¹⁴⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 18, 1755.

¹⁵⁰ Fox to Legge, October 2, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 323. Fox was doubtless hoping to win over Legge by appealing to his vanity.

¹⁵¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 4, 1755. Hardwicke remarked that the letter was one of the 'oddest' he had ever read; did it proceed from confidence in Legge, he wondered, or from contempt?—Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 6, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 398.

sition, Fox turned to more likely material, in which he reckoned Doddington, Sackville and the still reticent Bedford. The ex-Treasurer of the Navy was a man of slender principles and most sordid motives, but his nominal adherence to Leicester House would make him a useful pawn to represent the measures of the larger court, and his popularity in the social world meant the possibility of further accessions. Fox had the advantage of numbering him among his friends, and he knew that the notorious intriguer could be bought as soon as his vanity was sufficiently satisfied.

On the 2nd of October Doddington dined at Fox's expense at the Thursday Night Café in Hammersmith, and the Secretary-at-War expended much time and tactics in sounding his guest. The ex-Treasurer was unwilling as yet to concoct a definite answer, but he spoke of wishing to bring in Sir Francis Dashwood, while in all things he must 'be well with' Hillsborough, Murray, Halifax and Fox himself. But he evidently parted from his companion without making up his mind.

Fox was disposed however to be sanguine; he knew the old placeman was eager to come back to employment, but had probably declared openly against the Treaties—a fact which created natural hesitation. Newcastle should enlist Halifax and Murray—so he wrote the First Lord—and that too without loss of time.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Fox to Newcastle, October 2, 3, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 345.

The Duke was prompt in all matters of politics, and he obeyed his lieutenant without delay. Yet he certainly was imposing greatly on good nature when he now wrote to the man whose appeals for a garter had been persistently ignored, and there was not even a suggestion of reward for the disappointed Earl if he consented to lend his assistance. Places were promised for his two friends, Hillsborough and Doddington; but that was the extent of the Duke's atonement.¹⁵³ Yet Halifax had in mind the Cabinet Council and probably believed he saw an opening.

On the 6th, Murray, who had agreed to contribute his aid in the transaction, ran across Fox by accident and heard that all was not going well. Doddington complained of ill-treatment, and the shrewd Attorney-General decided that higher terms must be offered. He urged Newcastle to assume the negotiation himself, and above all to lose no time in the matter.¹⁵⁴ When the Duke obeyed, he found that Murray had in no wise underestimated the situation. In his valuation of himself Doddington was not unlike the most sordid of German princelings; and the First Lord was pained to confess that he was more rabid than Pitt on the subject of the Russian Treaty; when, in fact, the Duke had appeared surprised that Fox had not explained the Treaties, the other had said

¹⁵³ Newcastle to Halifax, October 4, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 369.

¹⁵⁴ Murray to Newcastle, October 7, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 417.

that he 'didn't believe Mr. Fox understood them himself'¹⁵⁵—which was probably true. In his account to the Chancellor the Duke added that the attitude of Leicester House 'operated more than all other circumstances put together'.¹⁵⁶ Shortly afterwards Newcastle learned that Egmont stood well with Lee,¹⁵⁷ and if such reconciliation had indeed taken place, the Duke knew that the Tory chief was further than ever from their hopes. Lady Yarmouth would have the King talk personally to his grandson,¹⁵⁸ but this last resource was not tried. Meanwhile the expectation of opposition was said to be almost universal,¹⁵⁹ and Newcastle must redouble his efforts to secure Doddington.

On the 19th the Duke met his intended friend again, and, no doubt after much wrangling, some preliminaries were drawn up,¹⁶⁰ considerably in excess of Doddington's just expectations, and slightly burdensome to the First Lord if he had been really disposed to take them seriously. Nothing more than a hint of something exalted

¹⁵⁵ Doddington, *Diary* (ed. 1828), app., pp. 270-1.

¹⁵⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1755.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. ; Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 18, 1755.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Hartington to Newcastle, October 7, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 413. Chesterfield, who was more in touch with the country than with the City and Court, had written of late, 'The next session, which now draws near, will, I believe, be a very troublesome one ; and I really think it seems doubtful whether the subsidiary treaties with Russia and Cassel will be carried out.'—*Chesterfield's Corres.* III. 1138.

¹⁶⁰ Doddington, *Diary* (ed. 1828), app., pp. 275-6.

was actually given to Doddington himself, but he was apparently satisfied with the promises for his friends.

Fox was already seeking to win Sackville as another valuable recruit, and managed to induce him to resume relations with Claremont. But Newcastle was grieved to see that Lord George was exceedingly reserved (although he 'paid a personal compliment to Mr. Fox'); such was the quality of his gratitude to Newcastle for saving his father from disgrace!¹⁶¹ Later it appeared that Lord George might yield somewhat, but he insisted that he should receive a 'special mark of favour as the price of his support', and this the Duke was apparently not yet prepared to obtain for him.¹⁶² Lord George's bent was the army, and he hesitated to take any step that might endanger his prospects.¹⁶³

The work of recruiting was not entirely the policy of one side in the matter of the Treaties. Thomas Potter was a member of the Pitt-Leicester House party who was peculiarly fitted for political handicraft. The Duke of Bedford was in particular the man for whom both sides would fight, and Potter felt much pleasure in having coaxed His

¹⁶¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1755.

¹⁶² Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 18, 1755.

¹⁶³ Memorandum by Sackville: Stopford-Sackville MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report IX (octavo), I. 49. Sackville was shrewd enough to be unwilling to become closely identified with the present Administration.—Sackville to Newcastle, November 10, 1755: Add. MSS., 32860, f. 434.

Grace into condemning the Subsidies. As for Newcastle, the Duke 'hoped in God no one of his friends, particularly Mr. Fox', would attempt to interfere with the First Lord's destruction. 'And now,' wrote Potter to Grenville, 'let Mr. F. and the Duke of Cumberland come and welcome.'¹⁶⁴

In fact the intrepid Potter appeared so successful that Temple thought to make the affair conclusive. Unfortunately the Earl was a man totally deficient in tact, and as the little Duke was of an inflammable temper, the meeting was cold and indecisive.¹⁶⁵ Potter accordingly returned to the rôle he enjoyed. The Pittites were fearful that the Duke might be prejudiced by the Cumberland version of the great rupture; Potter must therefore contrive that the story should be skilfully 'turned'.

But Bedford was too wary. He listened with patience to his guest's explanation, but loyalty kept him from accepting it entirely until he had Fox's own account; for hitherto his information had come from Rigby. He was disposed, however, to criticize his friend in the light of his recent promotion, which had saved the Minister they all hated; and, as for measures, he believed thoroughly in a sea war, but condemned the Subsidies, though he refused to make his attitude public as yet.¹⁶⁶

Very soon afterward Fox himself tried his

¹⁶⁴ Potter to Grenville (letter undated): *Grenville Papers*, I. 137.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Potter to Temple (letter undated): *Grenville Papers*, I. 140.

hand at winning the old Cumberland leader. He first prevailed upon Marlborough to consent to relinquish the Privy Seal,¹⁶⁷ in case that office should prove sufficient bait, and then wrote to Gower asking him to make Bedford the offer.¹⁶⁸ The Earl was glad to believe that the Duke of Newcastle had nothing to do with the transaction, but he refrained from giving his brother-in-law any personal advice.¹⁶⁹

The Duke made answer the next day and the plan seemed to have fallen through. Bedford was not only unwilling to be a part of any Administration of which Newcastle was a member—a determination he had held from the time he resigned the Seals—but was also emphatically opposed to the Treaties. He concluded by expressing his regret that he could not oblige Fox, for whom no one could wish better than himself.¹⁷⁰ The Secretary-at-War, on receipt of the Duke's decision, sent the First Lord an account, which the latter repeated to the Chancellor.¹⁷¹ Not cast down by his failure, Fox saw his friend at a conference of three hours on the 31st, but the Duke still refused to join any Administration of Newcastle's, and would not recant on the subject of the Treaties.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 405.

¹⁶⁸ Fox to Gower, October 14, 1755 : *Bedford Corres.* II. 168.

¹⁶⁹ Gower to Bedford, October 14, 1755 : *ibid.* II. 167.
Gower enclosed Fox's letter.

¹⁷⁰ Bedford to Gower, October 15, 1755 : *ibid.* II. 170.

¹⁷¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 18, 1755.

¹⁷² Fox to Newcastle, November 1, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32860, f. 266.

Notwithstanding his ill-starred endeavour, Fox must have found some relief therein. Had the Duke of Bedford determined to follow Devonshire into open hostility, there would have been a sad parting of the ways for the two friends; but luckily the Duke had said that he 'would never again give in to another Leicester House opposition'.¹⁷³ 'This is honest and open', wrote Fox to the Marquis, 'and were he not afraid of being thought to be governed, he would be doing right.'¹⁷⁴

The Marquis of Hartington was a valuable member of the Cumberland group of secessionists. On the 7th he had written to Newcastle endorsing with pleasure the promotion of his friend of Holland House. 'It will of course make Mr. Pitt more outrageous,' he wrote, 'and I take it for granted he will flame out most furiously, but as you will have a strong majority, I should hope it will not be attended by any bad consequence.'¹⁷⁵ The Lord Lieutenant had not then received the discretionary powers which had been promised him, but Fox had reminded Newcastle of the urgency of the case,¹⁷⁶ and the First Lord had already

¹⁷³ Probably an allusion to his co-operation with the late Prince's party in effecting the overthrow of Walpole.

¹⁷⁴ Fox to Hartington, November 4, 1755: Torrens, *History of British Cabinets*, II. 240.

¹⁷⁵ Hartington to Newcastle, October 7, 1755: Add. MSS., 32859, f. 413.

¹⁷⁶ Promised, as we have already noted, by way of a bribe to the Devonshires.

sent the despatches on the way. The Duke was eager that Hartington should explain the Russian Treaty to his father,¹⁷⁷ although he did not add that the favour to his son was calculated to move him. The Marquis did what he could, but he was not immediately successful.

Fox was still loth to lose Bedford. Both as a man of more than ordinary ability, and as one of the original members of the Cumberland 'anti-Newcastle society', the Duke must not be allowed to foster hopes in the breasts of the Ministry's enemies. The Secretary-elect had suggested that Hardwicke be urged to try his fortunes at Bedford House,¹⁷⁸ and Newcastle himself believed that the Chancellor could wipe out prejudices, where Fox would not take the pains to do so. Moreover it hurt the Duke's sensitiveness to responsibility that he should now be 'distinguished from the rest of the Ministers'.¹⁷⁹

A severe cold prevented Hardwicke from repairing to Bedford House the next night, but the day following that, November 3, the Chancellor enjoyed a long and indecisive colloquy. Bedford was pleased with Fox's promotion, but Hardwicke saw no way of bringing in Newcastle's name or the old points of disagreement, and practically all he could

¹⁷⁷ Fox to Newcastle, October 2, 3, 1755: Add. MSS. 32859, f. 345.

¹⁷⁸ Fox to Newcastle, November 1, 1755: Add. MSS., 32860, f. 266.

¹⁷⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 1, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 268.

do was to explain the Russian Treaty, adding a favourite argument of the Administration, that France would probably bid for the Swedish fleet, and the Court of St. Petersburg would make a useful balance-wheel. But beyond acquiescing in the Hessian Treaty, Bedford gave his guest small satisfaction.¹⁸⁰ A few days later, however, a little hope was gleaned from the assurance of Fox that Rigby had promised to vote for the Treaties, and, of course, with Bedford's approval.¹⁸¹

Meanwhile the canvassing for votes and speakers was pursued uninterruptedly and in all directions. The First Lord's plan, it will be remembered, was to raise an able corps of debaters to second the recognized leader; consequently much thought was at first directed to the acquisition of Lord Marchmont's brother, Hume Campbell, who was known as a speech-maker of more than usual fire. Unluckily the King put his veto on the proposition,¹⁸² and the buying of Campbell was necessarily deferred; but Hillsborough was no mean orator, and, as he was an influential member of the Cumberland party, his purchase—probably through Fox's efforts—caused not a little pleasure. Murray was, of course, chief of staff to the commander, and Oswald as well as Nugent (of the Treasury Board) could be relied upon for efficient assistance, both

¹⁸⁰ Hardwicke to Newcastle, November 3, 1755: Add. MSS., 32860, f. 324.

¹⁸¹ Fox to Newcastle, November 7, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 402.

¹⁸² Newcastle to Hardwicke, November 1, 1755.

of them being speakers of ability. Finally, 'old Horace', who had been indiscreet enough to dislike the Treaties, must be converted by the promise of a peerage.¹⁸³ After the initial battle the First Lord hoped that many of the Opposition would fall off, and Alderman Baker had cheered him with good news from the City. If Fox should act sincerely, the Alderman declared that he would 'risk his head' that they carried everything in the House of Commons. 'We are not now,' he declared, 'to be governed by speeches, that is over. All we want is a man to lead us on, and, depend upon it, we will follow.'¹⁸⁴ Thus may be seen the need, which had long been felt, of a responsible manager for the Commons.

Meanwhile the time for the session was fast drawing near and the mover of the Address was not chosen. Fox still clung to the idea of enlisting Sackville, who, he thought, would be the fittest to move the Address in the Commons.¹⁸⁵ The Chancellor was approached with a hint to lend his second son for the purpose, but the crafty lawyer was always conservative in any matter that might possibly be prejudicial to his family, and he refrained from giving a definite opinion.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 18, 1755.

¹⁸⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1755.

¹⁸⁵ Fox to Newcastle, November 7, 1755. Sackville's definite refusal was not written until the 10th.

¹⁸⁶ Newcastle to Fox, November 8, 1755: Add. MSS., 32860, f. 414.

At all events no time must be lost, thought Fox, for nobody would care to do it 'if spoke to late'.¹⁸⁷

Newcastle was not inclined to feel the necessity for such haste, and, knowing the force of obligation, he assured Fox that Barrington would consent 'on a day's notice'. A conference between the two managers was apparently held on November 10, and Lord Hillsborough was finally persuaded to undertake the task ; so that point was settled.

The First Lord showed as tireless an energy as his lieutenant in routing out members to attend on the first day ; and he spent most of the intervening weeks in writing letters to his brother peers for this purpose. To explain the Russian Treaty, to repeat the assurance that the Chancellor and he had been the instigators of the new appointment, and either to mention some obligation to himself or to hold out some hope of emolument—such is the method of campaigning disclosed in these epistles. Not content with this, the Duke enlisted Stone and Granville to assist in the canvassing,¹⁸⁸ for the Ministry were keenly alive to the probable effect of making a good show in the initial skirmish, and Newcastle even went the length of asking Hartington to send all their friends in Ireland to swell the numbers.¹⁸⁹ Walpole had recently written to a friend, 'We expect the Parliament to be

¹⁸⁷ Fox to Newcastle, November 7, 1755.

¹⁸⁸ Newcastle to Fox, November 8, 1755.

¹⁸⁹ Newcastle to Hartington, October 15, 1755.

thronged, and great animosities.’¹⁹⁰ But if the two adepts in corruption had done their work thoroughly, the shafts of Pitt and Leicester House were blunted already.

On the day of the meeting at the Cockpit, Fox sent word to the Chancellor that the Duke of Bedford had not only promised to send his dependents to the gathering, but expressed a desire to speak for the Address in the Lords;¹⁹¹ and the day following the Secretary-elect repeated his assurance to Newcastle.¹⁹² Meanwhile Hardwicke was working on the Address, to the composition of which his Grace of Woburn had contributed some suggestions.¹⁹³

On the eve of the great struggle the Secretary-designate presided at the Cockpit and saw with satisfaction that Bedford had kept his word.¹⁹⁴ Conspicuous for their absence were Pitt, Legge, Grenville and the Townshends;¹⁹⁵ but Fox had mustered the largest assemblage ever seen there,¹⁹⁶ and every foe was clearly known. As for himself, in two days more the War Office would cease to be

¹⁹⁰ Walpole to Bentley, October 31, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 360.

¹⁹¹ Fox to Hardwicke, November 12, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32860, f. 454.

¹⁹² Fox to Newcastle, November 13, 1755 : *ibid.*, f. 469.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* ; Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 405.

¹⁹⁴ Fox to Hardwicke, November 12, 1755.

¹⁹⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 405.

¹⁹⁶ 289 members were present.—Walpole to Conway, November 15, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 365.

his, while the fun of managing majorities would be its compensation. Would it pay? was the question to be answered. Walpole showed no little sagacity when he observed that Fox would either be 'First Minister' or be 'ruined'.¹⁹⁷ Such indeed was an accurate *résumé* of the case. There was no half-way position.

¹⁹⁷ Walpole to Mann, September 29, 1755 : *ibid.* III. 349.

CHAPTER VI

SECRETARY OF STATE

HENRY FOX in a certain sense had reached the crisis of his career. He was elevated—or would be in two days—to the highest public office which he had yet filled. Once before he had received this appointment, but honour and dignity had at that time compelled him to refuse it. He was now entering the office with his eyes open, and he knew what to expect, both from the man whom he was forced to acknowledge as his overlord, and from the foreign entanglements to which the policy of his own party had contributed. In the management of the Commons, with all its manifold requirements and ramifications, Fox was unquestionably without a peer ; it was his own sphere, his art, his cut-and-dried life-work (if nothing intervened to change his feelings), in short the haven of his highest aspirations. But unluckily this was but half, and, in justice to his country, the less important half, of the duty that was before him. He was about to take upon himself the burdens of a Secretary of State. Would he be the cipher in office that Robinson had been and Holdernessee was still, or would he show the fitness for statecraft that would *compel* his employers to let him control his depart-

ment, and, in short, that would impress his own personality upon British policy abroad? He had not the advantage of a diplomatic training, which even Sir Thomas Robinson had had, and in foreign affairs he had too often taken his cue from the Duke of Cumberland, or shaped his attitude to meet some political end. The very policy which the Government was then adopting was, according to all our evidence, in disagreement with his inmost feelings. True he might not openly blunder, but to *fail of high success* under a man like Newcastle was to become a cipher in office and nothing more.

The criticism of Fox from a political standpoint must, of course, depend upon another question. If he should be able to raise himself in the eyes of the nation, he might raise his party as well, and give his patron once more the power he had wielded. Nothing but the fiercest cabal could dislodge him, if he should prove a consummate diplomatist, or—perhaps by virtue of the royal Duke—an organizer of military glory. The unknown talent of Pitt, the unsuspected aims of Leicester House, would be as nothing in his path. But such results as these would be his only justification for reinforcing a tottering Administration. As the Duke of Bedford declared, in speaking of his friend's promotion, 'He has saved the Duke of Newcastle, who without his acceptance was absolutely undone; he could have run no risk in standing out, as Pitt had refused first, and

as, if the Duke of Newcastle fell, he stood first in the graces of the Closet ; he might have refused with much more safety than he did a year and a half since, and, as he lost no favour then, he could have lost none now.’¹

The truth was, Fox failed to realize that so far as his real political value was concerned, he had ‘lost no favour then’ ; and he was of too active and impatient a nature to play the waiting game that so wearied and exasperated his rival. Instead of that, he submitted to climb still higher on a rotting hulk that was doomed to sink with all its crew, unless his own talent and spirit could repair the seams. Even graver is the situation when we consider that he had now no solid support behind him. The little party, which he had first supported and later captained, had in its power the chance sooner or later to lay low the man whose childishness and incompetency had brought it into being. It is hardly too much to say that now in this very month of November the Cumberlands, by joining the opposition to the Treaties, could have turned the Newcastles out of office ; and yet the man who, in debating power and parliamentary talent, was the very essence of the party, had deserted its acknowledged standards, and virtually stamped out its political existence.

But the most serious phase of Fox’s error was one that was yet to be felt, one which he could not

¹ Potter to Temple (letter undated) : *Grenville Papers*, I. 145.

have perceived in its full strength now, and one out of which he would later find profit at the expense of his fellow Whigs. While the Cumberland Party existed, it was bound to be a telling weapon against the other faction of the royal house; the Duke was foremost in the King's affections, and the Princess dared not step too far. Now, however, by the annihilation of that party and the subordinating of its members to another interest, the Cumberlands were no longer in a position to cope with the little element that would soon wax great. There is indeed small doubt but that Bute had long been engaged in laying the foundations of his future power, and time would show that the Leicester House of 1756 would be very different from the Leicester House of 1755, when its only conspicuous champion was hated by the King and unheeded by the Commons.

Thus the time had clearly come when Henry Fox was called upon to prove his mettle. If he could coerce his colleagues by persuasion or practical domination, he might vindicate his course; but only thus could his political career be saved. Walpole had stated the truth when he declared that Fox would be Prime Minister or be ruined.

Parliament opened on the 13th of November, and as had been prophesied, advantage was taken from the Address in answer to the King's Speech, to assail the two Treaties. 'The details of the speeches, which were very long,' wrote Horace Walpole to his cousin, 'and some exceedingly

fine, it would be impossible to give you in any compass.’² Most of the prominent figures for and against the policy of the Administration made their comments in clear and spirited language in defence of the principles they had espoused. Grenville spoke well, Murray even better, while William Gerald Hamilton, a friend of Fox, made his début in a speech that won him an enduring fame.³ But the chief honours of the evening were taken by the Paymaster, who ridiculed Egmont’s arguments, deprecated the use of the King’s name in speeches, declaimed loudly for a naval war, and poured critical irony on the engagement with the Czarina. Yet he disclaimed ‘rancour to any man who had set himself at the head of this measure ; as yet that man had only his pity’ ; for it would ‘hang like a millstone about his neck and sink the Minister along with the nation’. Later he made the famous simile in reference to Fox and Newcastle : ‘I remember at Lyons to have been carried to see the conflux of the Rhone and Saône ; this a gentle, feeble, languid stream ; the other a boisterous and impetuous torrent—but they meet at last ; and long may they continue united to the comfort of each other, to the glory, honour and security of the nation.’⁴

² Walpole to Conway, November 15, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 365.

³ It was his one notable achievement, and he earned the nickname of ‘single-speech Hamilton’.

⁴ The speech abounded in theatrical efforts. He later im-

Fox rose after Pitt's long speech was finished, but was tired from his long campaigning, and said little. 'We are no longer representative,' he began, 'if a great majority is not declarative of the sentiments of the nation. Are we to feel no justice and gratitude unless the King asks it of us? Nobody has used the King's name so often as the honourable gentleman. He has shown a strong curiosity to know whose the measure was, while he said he intended to arraign only the measure.'⁵ The battle was waged till nearly five in the morning,⁶ and ended in a complete victory over the Opposition, which even failed to secure the elimination of allusions to Hanover from the Address.⁷ 'The new friends, the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Fox, had 311 to 105,'⁸ and after the first division there were but

pressed his hearers by depicting the King as far removed from honest counsellors and surrounded by frightened Hanoverians. After prophesying national bankruptcy, he concluded by saying that the French believed that England had not 'sense and virtue enough to make a stand'—a feeling in which he thought he concurred.

⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 412–17.

⁶ Walpole to Conway, November 15, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 365 ; West to Newcastle, November 14, 1755.

⁷ The portion of the Address which gave most offence to the Opposition ran as follows : 'We think ourselves bound in justice and gratitude to assist Your Majesty against insults and attacks, that may be made upon any of Your Majesty's dominions, though not belonging to the Crown of Great Britain, in resentment of the part Your Majesty has taken in a cause, wherein the interests of this kingdom are immediately, and so essentially concerned.'

⁸ Walpole to Bentley, November 16, 1755 : *Letters*, III. 368.

89 votes against 290 for the Ministry. Bedford's considerable following had been unanimous in their support of the Administration; while most of the Leicester House party were arrayed on the opposite side, although Egmont had cast in his lot with the Ministers—no doubt much to their surprise. In the Upper House nothing happened deserving special mention, except that Hartington, who had dreaded the first day,⁹ was spared further anxiety. The Duke of Devonshire had been absent from the House of Lords, and the dissolution of his party had probably discouraged him.

After the debate Fox said to Pitt, 'Who is the Rhone?'

'Is that a fair question?' asked the Paymaster in reply.

'Why, as you have said so much that I did not desire to hear,' answered Fox, 'you may tell me one thing that I would hear. Am I the Rhone, or Lord Granville?'

'You are Granville,' was the sage response.¹⁰

⁹ Hartington to Newcastle, November 27, 1755: Add. MSS., 32861, f. 106.

¹⁰ An allusion evidently to the fact that they were both members of the War Party. The 'gentle stream' and the 'impetuous torrent' referred to the division of parties which had existed in the Council of Regency. Temple said afterward that the Rhone was meant to represent Cumberland, Fox and Granville: and the Saône, Newcastle, Hardwicke and Murray.—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 418.

On the 14th Fox kissed hands for the Seals,¹¹ and Barrington formally replaced him at the War Office. Six days later, since an 'Opposition in Administration' ¹² was in no wise to be tolerated, Pitt, Legge and Grenville were notified that His Majesty had no further need of their services. It was clear that the gauntlet had been thrown down by the Paymaster and that the new Secretary had picked it up. Henceforth it might be expected that the Ministers would be as one in enforcing the policy of the Newcastle Administration.

Sir George Lyttelton was the choice selected to fill the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Bedford won another mark of commendation by promising not to oppose his re-election for a borough in which he apparently had the interest.¹³ 'Judge how entertaining it was,' exclaimed Walpole in a description of the first day's debate, 'to hear Lyttelton answer Grenville, and Pitt, Lyttelton.'¹⁴ The ex-Cofferer had in fact risen upon the ruins of the little party which had declined to appreciate him, and was now a disciple of its bitterest enemy. His

¹¹ Newcastle to Hartington, November 15, 1755 : Add. MSS. 32860, f. 480 ; *Gazette*, no. 9,528. The date is incorrectly given by Walpole as November 15.

¹² Quoted from Walpole's letter to Mann, November 16, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 370.

¹³ Fox to Newcastle, November 20, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32861, f. 41.

¹⁴ Walpole to Bentley, November 16, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 368.

convictions on the Subsidies were all that could be desired.¹⁵

The day after the ministerial purging, war became fiercer than ever in the House of Commons. Colonel Townshend, who had been frequently frustrated in military matters by the ex-Secretary-at-War, now trumped up a pretext for attacking Fox's circular letter. He declared in the course of his harangue that 'this was an unconstitutional act of a Minister, as desirous of power as ever Minister was, and who was willing to avail himself of his colleague's friends, though not fond of owning his colleague's measures; however, the foundations of his power were laid on a shattered edifice disfigured by his novelties'. The Colonel produced the letter, which he said had made him begin to think that he was not invited to support an Address to the King, but to vote people into place.

Fox rose in defence of his late tactics, admitted the indiscretion, but 'don't', he exclaimed, 'let this additional imprudence be imputed to me, that I should be thought to have addressed one to *that* gentleman.' He denied any undue influence in the letters, declared that they had not been worded with the thought that any gentleman might show one of them, and assured his audience that they were not sent 'promiscuously, but to

¹⁵ Lyttelton defended a system of subsidies on the ground that Hanover was endangered only by her connexion with England.—Lyttelton's Observations: Phillimore, *Memoirs of Lyttelton*, II. 480.

gentlemen of great consideration'. 'I may have written a silly letter,' he concluded; 'I am sure one of them was sillily addressed.'

Townshend replied that hundreds could repeat it by heart, and he renewed his attack with increasing warmth; but his 'awkward acrimony', as Walpole puts it, turned the sympathies of the House to the offending writer. Alderman Beckford then said, 'It is usual for those in great offices to be imprudent. I have great regard for the gentleman in question; he has abilities—the rest have not. We have a better chance with a man of sense.'¹⁶ The speaker did not realize perhaps that even a 'man of sense' cannot always sway a Cabinet.

But this was but a foretaste of the wrangle that was to follow. The next business was a motion for the number of seamen, introduced by Welbore Ellis, a friend and recent placeman of Fox. Pitt, after others had spoken, took occasion to deplore the lamentable condition of the country, 'so undone by the silly pride of one man or the timidity of his colleagues—who would share his pride but not his danger'. He condemned the shameful neglect that had existed since the late war (mentioning specifically Pelham's reduction of the seamen in 1750), and said the country had been delivered to His Majesty a wreck. The whole peril arose, he declared, from the struggle for power—and what was its motive?

¹⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 421-2.

Fox, in reply, defended Pelham's measures on the ground of compulsory economy, and though intimating that the matter was wholly irrelevant to the present question, he could not resist exclaiming, 'So not voting 2,000 more seamen in a time of peace was betraying the country !' He said he would never hear Mr. Pelham's measures censured without defending them ; as for those 'struggles for power' and their 'motive'—'let those who have struggled most and longest for power tell !' 'If,' he concluded, 'the honourable gentleman thinks the security of the country has been neglected, he should have mentioned it to Government in time, and not have reserved it till it is too late.'

Pitt neglected the arguments of his opponent to resort to his well-worn plea of injured innocence, and replied in tones of deep lament that he had been 'traded to his master' and his 'fair name assassinated' ; but he might have had what the honourable gentleman at a long distance of time so gladly accepted. The honourable gentleman was not yet Minister—not quite yet—though his sense and virtue might make him so. But even so, if he had been in Mr. Fox's situation, to have had the honour to approach his sovereign, he should not have rested a night without laying before him the miserable state of the kingdom and getting every assistance for its defence.

Fox replied with a sneer that he was certainly not aware of any offer that the honourable gentle-

man had refused. He dared affirm, he said, that no one had ever 'traded' Pitt in the Closet, that he for his part had never done him any harm there, and whoever would do so was the worst of men. When, moreover, it was inferred that no one who approached the King had either sense or virtue, that 'sense and virtue' must obviously be *somewhere else*. 'How shall the King hear of them?' he exclaimed, 'I fear *this* House will not inform him.' In conclusion he declared that he would support the King's measures to the extent of his abilities, and when they were contrary to his opinion, he would do 'as an honest man ought, adhere to his opinion and *desire to be dismissed*.' ¹⁷ The altercation, continued in several successive speeches, was one of the longest and bitterest that had ever taken place between the two adversaries. Fox had appeared almost wholly on the defensive, and 'he was chiefly to be admired', said one of his hearers, 'for his great command of himself, which the warmth he had used to show, now made remarkable.' But anger would have availed him little, just as it had often lowered Pitt, and had hurt Fox himself in his attack upon Hardwicke

¹⁷ Fox himself had not adhered to the principle that an officer should resign before opposing the Administration of which he was nominally a supporter; but now that he had more definitely espoused the Newcastle's cause by becoming Secretary of State, he could feel that he might taunt his rival without fear that his own conduct would be instanced. Nor should it be forgotten that Pitt was still enjoying a seat in Parliament for Aldborough, a Newcastle borough.

in 1753. Certainly he had never wielded the shafts of bitter sarcasm with more telling effectiveness than in this debate.

The discussion was taken up later by Murray, who had lain in wait to take advantage of any slips the ex-Paymaster should make, and now forced him to admit that the Seals had never been offered him.¹⁸ Such artless political lying did Pitt more harm than good. It was comparable to his pretence, on another occasion, of the 'respect' which he had felt for the great Walpole. We can hardly deem it strange that his audience should have laughed at him.¹⁹

The First Lord was filled with delight at the accounts which he received of the skirmish. To Hartington he wrote, 'I consider Your Lordship will have heard that in the debate on the fleet Mr. Fox and the Attorney-General got a complete victory over Mr. Pitt. There was a good deal of altercation between Pitt and Fox, and I may say the latter did very well, and had the better of his antagonist.'²⁰

Indeed, the Ministry's strength in the Commons seemed almost impregnable. Even the party of Leicester House was less formidable, now that

¹⁸ For the account of the day's debate: Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 422-30; notes by West (which he sent to Newcastle), November 21, 1755: Add. MSS., 32861, f. 55; Dupplin to Newcastle, November 21, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 61.

¹⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 436.

²⁰ Newcastle to Hartington, November 29, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 131.

Egmont, their chief, had declared for the Treaties ; although ‘ *for some reason* ’ (which Newcastle underlined meaningly) he would not accept an employment at present.²¹ Just what Egmont’s game was is not clear ; he was certainly not acting with Pitt or Lee, and yet he seemed unwilling to become identified with the Administration. He had some time ago expressed approval of the Russian Treaty, but, as Newcastle now intimated, was unwilling further to endanger his favour with Leicester House, or divorce himself from his party. Meanwhile the more conservative of the Tories, whose fundamental principles were independent of the tactics of the Princess, ‘ hated both Fox and Pitt so much (writes Walpole) that they sit still to see them worry one another.’²² Pitt was evidently not master of these patriots of Wyndham’s creed, and whether the Princess could influence them in his favour, or Egmont lead them to take measures against him, was what time and Toryism alone could tell.

The new Secretary and the ex-Paymaster did not bury their animosities on the day of the Seamen’s Bill. On the 3rd of May they took opposite sides on a motion for giving sailors a share of the prizes they should capture. Fox ridiculed Grenville’s ‘ pathetic speech ’ in favour of it, which brought Pitt to his feet in defence of his friend,

²¹ Newcastle to Hartington, November 29, 1755.

²² Walpole to Mann, November 16, 1755: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 370.

admitting, however, that Fox had spoken logically if not feelingly.²³

On the 5th they fenced more skilfully. When the Secretary-at-War moved an augmentation of the army, Pitt seconded the proposition in one of his most eloquent efforts, again harped upon the country's unpreparedness for war, and in the course of his speech alluded artfully to Fox's opposition to the regiments in 1745, when Bedford had been one of the abettors of the movement.

But Fox was in no wise overreached by the artifice, and, eager again to take advantage of Pitt's silence during the last session, he declared that since France had aroused them to action, his opponent should have made his speech sooner. 'If he had made it,' he added, 'I am sure I should have remembered it; I am not apt to forget his speeches.' He then taunted Pitt for not bringing in a militia-bill as a means of settling the difficulties; and finally taking up the matter of the regiments, he showed that he still stood on the same ground,²⁴ and paid a resounding tribute to the Duke of Bedford—the more forceful in

²³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 431–6.

²⁴ It will be remembered that Fox had greatly doubted the practicability of such a scheme, and that events had borne him out (see pp. 60–2). It was, of course, absurd for Pitt now to express the idea that the regiments had 'saved the country' in 1745; and such a falsehood may show that he was conscious of his unworthy motives at that time, and was seeking to justify himself.

proportion as he condemned the Duke of Montagu, another of the noblemen concerned.²⁵

Pitt answered that he had not given the alarm last year because he had been deluded into believing that there would be no war. Such an excuse as this was, of course, worse than no reply at all. He had verily not uttered a word in favour of vigorous action before the present session opened ;²⁶ yet he could not have been deaf to the rumours that spread from the Continent, and he had shown his real attitude when he seconded Fox and the Cumberlands in the preceding autumn. In the session following, when the situation across the Atlantic had become blacker, there had been no sign of discontent, no plea that the War Party was hurrying Great Britain into a war for which she was *unprepared*. He was now endeavouring—laudably, it is true—to infuse a little of his own spirit into the moribund Ministry that underestimated its task ; but he had, as Fox pointed out, been late in committing himself. When during the past two years the great orator was sulking at Hayes and Stowe, not patriotism but mortified personal ambition was the paramount emotion ; and Fox was quick to see the weapon in his hand.

The day was soon to come when the fate of

²⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 437–42. Rigby also gave Bedford an account.

²⁶ That is, in Parliament. Pitt had supported the Cumberlands in the Braddock controversy in 1754, but politics had kept him silent in the session which followed.

the foreign treaties would be definitely decided. No one, of course, supposed that they would fail to pass the Houses, but would the King's measures be supported by a majority large enough to impress the wavering minds throughout the country? Fox, for his part, had not ceased his active canvassing merely because of his first triumph, and during the last week in November as well as the first half of December, he worked indefatigably for the great cause.

The Ministry had little difficulty in finding aspirants for the places left vacant by the late removals. The suddenness of Lyttelton's appointment was in marked contrast to the long discussion of who should be Legge's successor, but in spite of his ill health²⁷ Sir George might weather the storm, and Newcastle seldom if ever considered anything but makeshifts. So many recruits had to be provided for that Lords Dupplin and Darlington were given the Pay Office between them, and the unpopularity of the latter for his connexion with the Mansfield-Stone scandal of 1753 gave rise to the remark that nothing showed more conclusively the dimensions of the Duke's absolutism.²⁸ Jemmy Grenville had resigned his place on the Treasury Board out of loyalty to his brother, and Charles Townshend was soon afterward dismissed; but their

²⁷ Lyttelton to Newcastle, February 2, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32862, f. 317.

²⁸ Walpole to Bentley, December 17, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 375.

posts were still vacant. It was in fact decided that, as the crucial days of the Treaties had not yet come, no other disposition should be made until the holidays, when the new officials might prepare for re-election.²⁹

One who certainly must be secured to the Administration was Hume Campbell. Fox had vetoed the suggestion of the Pay Office for some reason,³⁰ and the young Scotsman had made the Chancellor furious by repeating some gossip he had heard about Charles Yorke ;³¹ but the First

²⁹ Walpole to Mann, December 4, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 373. Hardwicke had demurred at first, but finally gave in to the First Lord, who felt that, whereas removals could not be avoided after the events of the first day, it was nevertheless wiser to defer the elections.—Add. MSS., 32861, ff. 131, 298.

³⁰ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 445. The fact may lead one to wonder if Fox was not—even as early as this—cherishing the thought that he himself might some time have a desire for this lucrative post. A joint Paymastership was perhaps less likely to be permanent than a single occupancy of the place ; and Fox could not have possessed an implicit confidence in the staying powers of the Newcastle Administration. Furthermore, we have noticed on one former occasion when a lucrative office had at least been a temptation ; and Potter could not have written without some ground when he ranted of Fox's 'thirst for power and money'.—*Grenville Papers*, I. 140. It was well known that Fox was a seasoned gambler.

But the point is brought up only as a possibility. Fox may simply have had some one else in mind for the Pay Office ; and certainly we have no reason to feel that he was not anticipating a successful career in his present office.

³¹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 5, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32861, f. 200.

Lord knew that too many orators could not be arrayed against the terrible champion of the Opposition, and so appealed to Fox³² to try his diplomatic skill with Scottish placemen, and find a vacancy somehow. The late Secretary-at-War in the rôle of negotiator with Scotsmen, especially with the Duke of Argyll,³³ was little short of ludicrous, but Fox had an abundance of political courage, and Campbell received the office of Registrar of Scotland.³⁴ The King had, of course, changed his mind and consented to the promotion.³⁵

Doddington's reticent dignity was finally shattered when Grenville's late post of Treasurer of the Navy was held out invitingly ; and the accession of this arch-intriguer meant that Harry Furnese and Sir Francis Dashwood would probably follow in his train. Halifax must be coaxed into good humour, as he could influence Oswald, one of the ablest speakers of the House ; and Arundel and others must be bought with Irish pensions.³⁶

³² Newcastle to Fox, December 12, 1755 : *ibid.*, f. 284.

³³ Argyll was a cousin of Sir Harry Erskine, whose case against Anstruther had been opposed by Fox.

³⁴ Displacing the Marquis of Lothian. Fox had met with considerable difficulty in this exploit (Fox to Newcastle, January 2, 1756), but after he succeeded in procuring Argyll's assistance in getting Lothian to relinquish the office, he finally decided to risk the latter's displeasure by offering it to Campbell in any event.—Fox to Newcastle, January 10, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32862, f. 65.

³⁵ Newcastle to Fox, December 12, 1756.

³⁶ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 14, 1755 : Add. MSS., 35415, f. 124.

Indeed so large a corps was desired for the defence of the Russian subsidy that some figures of days gone by were exhumed and paraded in order to swell the number. Walpole was much amused at the accession of Furnese and especially Lord Sandys,³⁷ sometime an enemy of Orford, and now secured by the influence of the Chancellor.³⁸ Dashwood, being of the Princess's faction, was unable to accept office, but Newcastle had it from trustworthy authority that he would 'be pleased with the offer and it would have a very good effect'.³⁹

Fox's chief ambition in this connexion was to complete the good work, already begun, of winning over the members of his old party. Marlborough was not likely to go astray, and Hillsborough had already come over, but the really indispensable member was his friend at Woburn, who could attract his numerous relatives to the cause. He accordingly assured himself that Newcastle would pull Sandwich out of obscurity,⁴⁰ and thereby was enabled to secure the Duke of Bedford without

³⁷ Walpole to Mann, December 21, 1755, *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 380.

³⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, December 21, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32861, f. 357.

³⁹ Newcastle to Fox, December 12, 1755.

⁴⁰ Newcastle to Hartington, November 29, 1755. Fox had urged the claims of Sandwich soon after he began his work for the Ministry ; but Hardwicke persuaded Newcastle that favours to His Lordship might wisely be deferred till some complaint should arise which required such a remedy.—Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 4, 1755 ; Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 6, 1755.

difficulty.⁴¹ A few days later he met the much-sought statesman at an evening dinner, and was able to write the First Lord that 'he was just what he (Newcastle) would have him, and as much Lord Chancellor's as if he had never been out of place'.⁴² Fox felt, however, that the bargain would be more certainly fulfilled if Gower were given a place in the Cabinet, as Bedford would probably ask it anyway;⁴³ and Newcastle even signified his consent to find something for Rigby, at the Secretary's request. Gower was finally appointed to the old office of his father, supplanting Marlborough, who, in turn, became Master-General of the Ordnance; while Sandwich was persuaded by Fox to accept Egmont's discarded post, the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland,⁴⁴ and Rigby won a seat in the Board of Trade,⁴⁵ which had to satisfy him for the present. Hartington seemed greatly pleased with this practically complete fusion of his party with the Administration, and wrote to the First Lord that the accession of his 'cousin of Bedford' was a master-stroke in politics, while the acquisition of Sandwich would do much to bring Newcastle

⁴¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 6, 1755 : Add. MSS., 35415, f. 122.

⁴² Fox to Newcastle, December 12, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32861, f. 282.

⁴³ Newcastle to Fox, December 12, 1755.

⁴⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 20, 1755 : *ibid.*, f. 357.

⁴⁵ Walpole to Mann, December 21, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 380.

closer to His Royal Highness.⁴⁶ Meanwhile the little Duke pacified his conscience by refusing to accept any office, and he wept when he consented to vote for the Treaties.⁴⁷ But Fox might well be pleased with his work, for most of the prominent Cumberlands had now followed in his footsteps.

But the purchase of voters by places and pensions was in no wise the only feature (nor in this case, the most important feature) of Fox's work for the Subsidies. There was still that potent force of so much value in his dealings with the less ambitious figures of a corrupt political world. 'Pitt . . . is a much better speaker than I am,' he wrote to his friend, Collinson. 'But tickling the palm, not the ear, is the business now, and he that can do the first is the best orator, let him speak ever so ill.'⁴⁸ Cynical as the words are, they spoke the absolute truth. Of what use were Pitt's histrionic distortions, when lucre could satisfy wants, while logic could pacify the conscience? Such were the two weapons which Fox was able to wield—and such were all that he needed for his purpose.

The relations of the manager and his chief appeared to be amicable, if we may judge from the absence of complaints in Newcastle's epistles to the Chancellor. In one letter he writes, 'Fox has

⁴⁶ Hartington to Newcastle, January 12, 1756: Add. MSS., 32862, f. 88.

⁴⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 405.

⁴⁸ Fox to Collinson, January 25, 1756: Add. MSS., 28727, f. 42.

been with the King this morning. He is very right in every disposition proposed as to employment ;' ⁴⁹ and 'very affectionately yours' occurs at least once in the course of his correspondence with the new Secretary. Yet Walpole tells us, 'The Duke of Newcastle and his coadjutor, Mr. Fox, squabble twice for agreeing once ; as I wish so well to the latter, I lament what he must wade through to real power, if ever he should arrive there.' ⁵⁰ Certain it is that the Cumberlands had nearly as many of the new appointments as the friends of Newcastle, although the fact by no means proved unselfishness on the First Lord's part. Fox, Newcastle and Hardwicke were sole members of the appointment committee, and perhaps that was why Granville was 'out of humour' and insisted that he 'could have done better'. ⁵¹

On December 10 the second debate ⁵² upon the Treaties took place. Barrington commenced the struggle in the Lower House by moving to refer the Russian Treaty to the Committee of Supply—a motion which Potter vehemently opposed on the ground that the Treaty was an infraction of the

⁴⁹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 6, 1755 : Add. MSS., 35415, f. 122.

⁵⁰ Walpole to Mann, December 21, 1755 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 380. Walpole probably writes what he wants to believe. There is no trustworthy evidence that the two men 'squabbled'.

⁵¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, December 15, 1755 : Add. MSS., 35415, f. 129.

⁵² 'A long and warm debate', wrote Stone to Newcastle.

Act of Settlement and therefore unconstitutional.⁵³ Fox replied to this, that the gentleman's accusation was too weighty for his conclusion; was he content, after alleging such crimes, with preventing the Treaties from being referred to the Committee?

The Junior Secretary was followed by Hume Campbell, Newcastle's recent discovery in the way of oratorical volcanoes, in a spirited speech chiefly levelled against Pitt. He talked much of the daily invectives that were thrown out without foundation, and said that 'it would be more manly to introduce a charge and prove it; if it failed, it ought to bring the censure of the House on the false accuser'.

Pitt then rose, and calling him to order 'like an angry wasp',⁵⁴ he made both a violent arraignment of the Treaties, and a bitter personal attack upon Campbell as well as upon lawyers in general. Stone afterward criticized the speech as being 'without any weight', but in the fire and majesty of his eloquence the ex-Paymaster was undoubtedly at his best, and the neophyte who had attacked him soon cowered beneath his thrusts.

But Fox had been his rival too long to be awed by his genius in oratory, and rising in defence of

⁵³ This plea, advanced by Potter, Pitt and others of the Opposition, is well analysed by Dr. von Ruville (*Chatham*, I. 383-4), who shows how Murray logically refuted the charge.

⁵⁴ Walpole to Bentley, December 17, 1755: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 375.

Campbell, he assailed Pitt in a speech of much sarcasm and ingenuity. With reference to Pitt's invectives, he said the House had been so accustomed to them from that quarter that they had lost all force within these walls and even without; and the Ministry had '*sense and virtue*' enough to look on them only as amusements of the day.⁵⁵

Hume Campbell afterwards broke silence, but seemed to have lost all his power to impress.⁵⁶ The motion was carried by a vote of 318 to 126, and five days later, after another pitched battle (though less bitter than that of the 10th⁵⁷), both Treaties were passed by Parliament, 'notwithstanding (wrote a friend of Fox) they were so much abused without doors.' In the Commons the vote for the Russian Treaty was 263 to 69; for

⁵⁵ 'Mr. Fox', wrote Stone to Newcastle, 'defended both his friends (Murray and Campbell) with great spirit and ability, and to the general satisfaction—as well as the measure of the Treaties and the Administration in general. . . . Upon the whole it was a day of great success, and a great superiority in argument as in numbers.'

⁵⁶ He acknowledged his debt to Fox by saying that he had not expected such support—he would 'study to deserve it'.

⁵⁷ One little episode in the Lords on that day is worthy of notice. Hardwicke, in the course of an able speech in defence of the Treaties, declared with some bitterness that ministers 'were sometimes like angels, sometimes like monsters'; whereupon Temple replied cuttingly that he did not know whom the Lord Chancellor depicted as 'angels' but he had sometimes heard one man painted as a 'monster'—he did not know how he would be represented now. Inasmuch as Hardwicke had never forgotten his quarrel with Fox so keen a thrust must have touched him to the quick.

the Hessian 259 to 72.⁵⁸ Stone, West and Dupplin had faithfully noted down the proceedings in the Commons, and the First Lord must have sighed with relief that his greatest anxiety was now at an end. And Fox had saved the Subsidies.

Foreign courts had not been asleep while England was trying to find her Treaties palatable. Disgusted with the feebleness of the Court of Versailles, and shaken in his trust in the military efficiency of France as a balance-wheel to Russian hostility, Frederick had resolved to deceive his credulous ally, and gain immediate admission into the opposite system by a reconciliation with England. The first step was to learn the exact nature of the Convention of St. Petersburg, and to this end his ambassador at London requested Fox for a copy. But Fox was cautious in a matter that concerned the policy of his new chief, and he referred Michel to Holdernessee and Newcastle.⁵⁹ Michel then called upon Holdernessee, and a copy was sent to him four days later. At the same time proposals were made by the Ministry⁶⁰ which

⁵⁸ Authorities for the closing scenes of the struggle :—Notes by West, December 10, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32861, f. 271 ; Stone to Newcastle, December 10, 1755 : *ibid.* f. 275 ; *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 375–6 ; Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 454–82 ; Digby to Williams, December 23, 1756 ; Stone MSS. (Brit. Mus.), 263.

⁵⁹ Holdernessee to Newcastle, November 21, 1755 : Add. MSS., 32860, f. 59.

⁶⁰ The solid advantages which the English Government offered Frederick were (1) guarantee of Silesia, (2) protection

Frederick accepted with alacrity, and an understanding was reached actually more than two weeks before the Russian Treaty passed the House of Commons.

Meanwhile, as diplomatic revolutions can seldom conceal their smoke, every effort was made, and no amount of money spared by the Court of Versailles to keep the Prussian King in the present 'system'.⁶¹ Unluckily for his court, Nivernais had reached Berlin too late to convert Frederick from his policy, and the French ministers, who had refused to give actual credence to the rumours of a *rapprochement*,⁶² now found themselves the victims of their own blindness as well as the trickery of Frederick. After several conferences between Michel on the one hand, and Newcastle, Fox and Holderness on the other, the Convention of Westminster was concluded, January 16, 1756. 'The two parties,' wrote Newcastle to the Lord Lieutenant (now by his father's decease Duke of Devonshire), 'engage to prevent the entering or passage of any foreign troops (viz. French or Russian) which shows this is a certain consequence of our

from Russia, and (3) settlement of pending disputes. It was agreed that Frederick should pay the interest on the Silesian loan, while Holderness was to offer him not less than £20,000 as indemnification for the prizes taken by the British fleets during the late war.

⁶¹ Intelligence from Cressener, December 2, 1755: Add. MSS., 32861, f. 169.

⁶² Waddington, *Louis XV et le Renversement des Alliances*, p. 194.

treaty with Russia. . . . Both kings are pleased with each other.'⁶³ The treaty was naturally followed by an exchange of ambassadors, and Sir Andrew Mitchell departed to represent England at the Court of Berlin.

The results of such a *renversement* must inevitably be far-reaching. Through a policy of subsidizing that had penetrated even to the Court of St. Petersburg, the Duke of Newcastle had, by unintentionally forcing the King of Prussia into an alliance, been chiefly instrumental in changing the recognized system of Europe. Austria could never be expected to remain in an association of which Frederick was a member, and France could not follow the Prussian lead while her relations with England were in a state of chaos that was war in all but name. One can hardly censure the Newcastle Ministry for a movement so effective that its error lay perhaps only in the tardiness of its inception, but whether or not a general war could have been averted if such action had been taken earlier is at least a debatable question.

Fox's position as Secretary of State for the southern department brought him into diplomatic relations with the peaceable courts of Turin and Madrid, while any negotiation with France likewise passed through his hands. The amicable feelings of Sardinia were carefully maintained by her

⁶³ Newcastle to Devonshire, January 17, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32862, f. 121.

ambassador at London, Comte de Viri, and no further mention need be made of that court. In Spain diplomatic policy had long been shaped by a shrewd Irishman, General Wall (sometime ambassador to England), who, by virtue of the King's favour and confidence, had availed himself of a revolution to become, to all intents and purposes, Prime Minister. Newcastle was not only perfectly aware that the absolute security of Spain's neutral position lay in the Irishman's continued control of Spanish diplomacy, but he made it his special endeavour to allow no interruption of the friendly relations which had existed since the special treaty signed with Madrid after the late war; and fortunately Ambassador Keene, though not a brilliant man, was eminently fitted to second the Ministry in preserving these feelings of cordiality. 'For God's sake don't abandon us,' the Duke wrote to Wall in his characteristic style. 'I mean don't let anything make *you* quit your station. All countries have their Pitts and their Foxes, but with proper resolution and management that may be withstood everywhere.'⁶⁴ This letter bore the date of April 28, when Newcastle little realized that Henry Fox would ever become the departmental secretary for Spanish affairs.

In addition to the business of diplomacy with certain courts Fox had also the general supervision of the colonies—though the work of a more

⁶⁴ Newcastle to Wall, April 28, 1755: Add. MSS., 32854, f. 309.

detailed character was in the hands of the Board of Trade. The office of Secretary for the southern department was clearly of a nature to afford rare opportunities to a man who, like Fox, possessed a talent for organization ; and both the disunion among the American colonies and their long neglect by the Government presented strikingly promising material for the hand of a fearless innovator. But Fox was not the man for such duties ; he had never had experience in problems requiring initiative, and the forces which he (of all men) knew best how to direct were after all tangible individuals, not vague and distant communities ; he was conscious of danger on a broad horizon, but lacked any real penetration ; and being wholly devoid of creative instinct, he was naturally powerless to influence the Cabinet—which always presented the appearance of regarding the colonies as a bore. The only matter commending itself to the Ministry as really important was the case of General Shirley, Braddock's successor in America. Like Cumberland in England,⁶⁵ Shirley amused himself with dreams of conquering Canada ; and in 1755 he had commenced to work out some scheme without waiting the tedious interval for the Government to signify its approval. All this naturally disturbed the colonies in the even tenor of their ways, and Sir William Johnson, whose popularity was growing,

⁶⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, August 4, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 568.

and whose favour was higher with the Board of Trade, went so far as to threaten resignation unless his authority should be made independent. The upshot of the affair was the recall of Shirley on March 13, 1756. 'This is not owing to any dissatisfaction with your services,' wrote Fox evasively, 'but on the contrary it is the King's intention as a mark of his royal favour to appoint you Governor of Jamaica.'⁶⁶ But some unexpected events had meanwhile considerably aggravated the case. Two intercepted letters to the Duc de Mirepoix⁶⁷ revealed the extent or supposed extent of Shirley's designs against the French. Cumberland and Halifax were aghast; and Fox proposed that the chiefs of the Cabinet should confer on the subject in the Duke's apartments on the 29th. 'I don't suspect Shirley of treachery,' he wrote to Newcastle, 'but I have no doubt of his having great schemes, and that he trusts the execution to traitors, and that he ought not to stay in America.'⁶⁸ Cumberland was, as usual, more violent, and urged that the General should be brought home a prisoner; but Fox, with the support of Hardwicke, prevailed for the 'gentler method',⁶⁹ which—judging from Fox's letter on the 31st—was the immediate recall of the General,

⁶⁶ Palfrey, *History of New England*, V. 145-6.

⁶⁷ Fox to Webb, March 31, 1756: Dartmouth MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Report XIV, app. x, p. 7.

⁶⁸ Fox to Newcastle, March 27, 1755: Add. MSS., 32864, f. 12.

⁶⁹ Hardwicke to Newcastle, March 31, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 38.

clothed in the pretext that he was needed by the Government for deliberation on the colonies.⁷⁰ The whole affair was of slight importance in comparison to the general crisis; but it represents our only picture of Fox as a prominent figure engaged in the settlement of a colonial problem.⁷¹ It was only in cases like this that his political talent could serve him. He was no more capable than Newcastle of directing the concerted action of England and her colonies in America.

The policy of Versailles was admittedly puzzling. Mirepoix had declared that his court would carry the war into every part of Europe,⁷² but since the burst of wrath which followed the Boscawen episode the Court of Versailles had given few grounds for exciting alarm. Yet, was not this very apathy a subject for suspicion? for even with a government as feeble as that of France there is assuredly a limit to a policy of preserving peace at the cost of trade. Small wonder, then, that toward the close of the year the Duke of Newcastle received constant intelligence of a hostile nature.

⁷⁰ Fox to Shirley, March 31, 1756: *Penn. Archives*, II. 558. Fox bade him 'repair to England with all possible expedition', and sent another recall later under flying seal.—Fox to Loudoun, May 8, 1756: Dartmouth MSS., *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

⁷¹ The most that we can say of Fox in his capacity as Secretary of State was that he proved a capable official. The energetic tone of his despatches is well exemplified by his letters to colonial governors.

⁷² Newcastle to Holderness, July 11, 1755: Add. MSS., 32857, f. 40.

Not only was it proposed to put an army in the field, but Hanover was selected as the special object of attack ⁷³—the surest means (so probably it was thought) of checking England's activity on the sea.

But in point of fact the Court of Versailles was still shutting its eyes to the exigencies of the conflict with England, and determined to make one more effort for peace with its formidable rival across the Channel. In January, Rouillé communicated with Secretary Fox (by way of the French Ambassador at The Hague) to the effect that his court was ready to treat for peace, provided that England, as an indispensable preliminary to the negotiation, should return the prizes she had won by 'piraterie' and 'brigandage'.⁷⁴ Acceptance of such a stipulation would of course have saved French honour, but placed England in a most unpleasant light.

The English Ministers, who had obviously carried their policy too far to admit of retrocession, showed little hesitation in the course they should pursue. Fox replied to Rouillé's memorial that he had laid the proposal before the King without delay, and His Majesty had absolutely refused the preliminary demand. The response further charged the French court with having been the

⁷³ Intelligence from Cressener, January 12, 1756 : Add. MSS. 32862, f. 86.

⁷⁴ Walpole to Mann, January 25, 1756 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 390 ; Rouillé to Fox, December 21, 1756 : *West Papers* : Add MSS., 34728, f. 40. (Doubtless Walpole's informant was Fox.)

aggressors during a period of peace, of which Fox added, 'on a les preuves les plus authentiques.'⁷⁵ The French had declared that failure to comply with their demand would be regarded in the light of a declaration of war, and the events which transpired after this last failure to heal the breach showed that the Court of Versailles was disposed to accept the inevitable, and prepare for immediate hostilities.

Meanwhile, in Parliament, measures were almost entirely of a military character, and frequently became the occasion of sharp encounters between Fox and Pitt. On January 23, when the alleged tyranny of Knowles, Governor of Jamaica, was brought up for discussion, Fox apparently took the part of the offender. This was enough to rouse Pitt, who struck at his rival for 'endeavouring to screen the guilty', and then went out of his way to pay court to Beckford, the friend of Fox who had introduced the case.⁷⁶ Five days later, in a debate on the proposal to reward the distinguished services of British commanders in America, Pitt declared with warmth that England had a 'disjointed ministry', which united in 'corrupt and arbitrary measures'.

Fox took up the challenge with great fire. After

⁷⁵ Fox to Rouillé, January 13, 1756: Add. MSS., 34728, f. 40.

⁷⁶ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 3. Beckford eventually transferred his affections entirely to Pitt. 'Toad-eater to the mountebank' Fox rather inelegantly labels him in his *Memoirs*.

thanking Pitt for the great service he had done him by his attacks, he assured him that he knew of no such disunion ; he believed Pitt himself did not, or he would join one part of the Administration against the other as he had done formerly. ' His complaints,' he concluded, ' being general, prove a general harmony, except with one family ; and their clamours will never pass for the voice of the nation.'⁷⁷ This was a fierce onslaught upon the Cousinhood, and Grenville, who felt chronic dissatisfaction with himself and every one else, broke out into angry remonstrance at the affront. But the speeches of Fox—if we are to believe his own account—met with resounding applause, and ' he (Pitt) and Grenville were like men beside themselves, lost in passion ' ; while the Speaker told Fox afterward that ' if Pitt . . . did not provide better matter to make his fine speeches upon, he would soon grow as insignificant as any man who ever sat in the House '⁷⁸ Such was certainly

⁷⁷ ' Your Grace cannot imagine,' wrote Fox to Devonshire, ' how excessively angry he was at this last—I think only—*smart* thing.' We can well imagine that Pitt was angry. The clever allusion to his support of Newcastle against Pelham in 1750 (see p. 95) was only too likely to have telling effect, and the speaker—according to Fox—declared that the latter had won a ' complete conquest ' in this debate. Fox himself deplored the fact that Dupplin, by calling Pitt to order, ' prevented him (to use Fox's words) from exposing himself, and me from exposing him still more.'

⁷⁸ For this debate—Fox to Devonshire, January 31, 1756 : Torrens, *History of British Cabinets*, II. 274 ; Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 4-5.

a reflection on the intrinsic value of Pitt's powers of eloquence, and Onslow was not wont to be partial, or hasty in his judgements. But the truth seems to have been that Pitt had not yet struck the right chord to gain the sympathy of his hearers. It required national disasters to accomplish that end, and at present there were few grounds for calling the Ministry 'disjointed'.⁷⁹

During the month of February the question of accepting an offer of four Swiss battalions for American service became a vehicle for much heated discussion, most of which was wholly irrelevant. Charles Townshend had asked Fox more than two months previous to consent to an inquiry into the management of American affairs, and added that if Fox refused to present the necessary papers he would do so himself, as they were all at his disposal.⁸⁰ For some reason the plan was suffered to slumber, but Fox probably believed that the present question, being pertinent to America, would be employed by Townshend as a pretext for renewing his policy. At any rate the

⁷⁹ According to Walpole, Fox told his rival after the debate that, far from there being any friction between Newcastle and himself, there were men—and Pitt knew that he meant the Townshends—who had offered to give up their allegiance to Pitt if the First Lord would relinquish the Junior Secretary, but that Newcastle had refused.—*Memoirs of George II*, II. 5. This may very well have been gossip; and yet Walpole would have been glad to believe the Ministry 'disjointed'.

⁸⁰ Fox to Newcastle, December 3, 1755: Add. MSS., 32861, f. 186.

former's accurate memory had stored up some remarks of Townshend that he had heard, distinctly implying that no grievances of the Americans existed ; and Fox anticipated hostilities by repeating them now ' with all the art and severity imaginable '.

The young orator of the Pittites was dumb-founded. When he could find words to express himself, he replied in a speech of much wit and cleverness, but he protested that he had never complained of *civil* oppressions in the Colonies. Fox, eager to press his advantage, responded that it gave him much satisfaction to hear that there was no oppression in the civil government, ' and thus (writes Walpole) pinned down Charles Townshend from producing a detail of grievances that he had prepared on American affairs.' ⁸¹

In one of the debates, probably on the same measure, Pitt rose with much anger to condemn the action of the Ministry in dismissing Sir Henry Erskine from the army on account of his vote against the Subsidies. The allegation was undoubtedly true, and the injustice was only too manifest ; but Pitt often allowed his resentment to pass the bounds of parliamentary etiquette, and when he made the charge without qualification, his calmer rival promptly called him to order and forced him to modify his assertion.⁸² The combats

⁸¹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 20-1.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 9. It might be pointed out here that Pitt himself when he became Prime Minister as Lord Chatham, deprived

of these two great rivals seemed the daily entertainment of the assemblage. 'The House of Commons,' wrote Walpole to Conway soon after this debate, 'is dwindled into a very dialogue between Pitt and Fox. . . . Sometimes it is a little *piquant*; in which, though Pitt has attacked, Fox has generally had the better.'⁸³

Lyttelton, neither in debate nor in financial expedients, showed himself an especially capable member of the Ministry. One of the measures in his budget was a proposed tax on plate, which proved so unpopular that Fox had to do some special campaigning to be sure that Parliament would remember its subservience. In this work he was ably seconded by Rigby, and was soon able to report to his chief a successful outlook.⁸⁴ Yet feeling was so strong against the measure that Newcastle would have abandoned it rather than risk a manifestation of weakness in the Commons; had not Fox, who could argue on any subject to which he gave his attention, restrained the First Lord from a concession that might compromise the

a man (Edgcumbe) of a subordinate position for no other reason than because he wished to confer the office upon a satellite of his own. As evidences of political immorality, there is not much distinction between the two cases; although it is, of course, true that there was less excuse for making the army a victim of party politics.

⁸³ Walpole to Conway, February 12, 1756: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 395.

⁸⁴ Fox to Newcastle, March 20, 1756 (first letter of that date): Add. MSS., 32863, f. 396.

dignity of the Administration.⁸⁵ With some help from Fox in the debates⁸⁶ the bill was finally passed, but one of the divisions had revealed a bare majority of nine, and it was fortunate for the Ministry that a proposed tax on bricks—also unpopular—had been abandoned.⁸⁷ This was a shock to Newcastle's strength in Parliament that was almost unprecedented in his history, and Bedford did not disguise his concern.⁸⁸ It is even reasonable to suppose that but for Fox's efforts, the Ministry might have incurred disaster. Could it be possible that patronage was losing its power?

Meanwhile the Ministry had begun to feel the terror of unseen foes. In January, Devonshire sent Fox an anonymous letter to the effect that the French would invade Ireland and Scotland in July, an intelligence which corroborated a report already received by Robinson when Secretary.⁸⁹ During the next few weeks advices of a hostile nature came with uncomfortable frequency:

⁸⁵ Walpole to Conway, March 25, 1756: *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 407.

⁸⁶ Lyttelton to Lyttelton, March 1, 1756: Phillimore, *Memoirs of Lyttelton*, II. 508. Lyttelton's praise of Fox's part in the debate might be set beside Walpole's assertion that neither Fox nor Pitt spoke with much understanding.—*Memoirs of George II*, II. 3.

⁸⁷ Lyttelton to Newcastle, March 1, 1756: Add. MSS., 32863, f. 150.

⁸⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, March 21, 1756: Add. MSS., 32863, f. 418.

⁸⁹ Devonshire to Fox, January 24, 1756: Add. MSS., 32862, f. 210.

France had designs upon English trade and seaports, and the King was urged to attack Port Mahon ;⁹⁰ she was indignant at the Prussian Treaty as a 'breach of confidence and regard' ;⁹¹ plans were being made to attack British vessels, and Marshal Belle-Isle had presented a plan to the King for two expeditions, one against England, the other to attack Minorca ;⁹² France would invade both England and Ireland, and expected by taking Portsmouth to march upon London ; also (in the same report) the Court of Vienna had been sounded.⁹³ During the month of February secret intelligence from Paris continually besieged Newcastle about the projected invasion of England, and the huge army to be employed for that purpose. But as early as the 4th of that month the First Lord had received an advice that Minorca was to be surprised—and the report had been repeatedly confirmed.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Secret Intelligence from Cressener, January 26, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32862, f. 220.

⁹¹ Intercepted letter of Bunge to Höpken, January 31, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 299.

⁹² Intercepted letter of Bunge to Höpken, February 6, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 383.

⁹³ Secret Intelligence from Cressener, February 9, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 402. The report appears to have been true in a measure. Cressener probably knew that the Abbé de Bernis had dined with the Austrian Ambassador on the 4th (see Waddington, p. 312), and naturally deduced that the rupture with Prussia had led to some new projects.

⁹⁴ 'A state of the intelligence relating to the preparations at Toulon and the design against the Island of Minorca

The terror of Newcastle seemed heightened by every fresh rumour of French activity. The army must certainly be augmented—but how? There was no efficient militia to be counted upon, and regiments of volunteers, obtained by noblemen's generosity, had already proved a fiasco. Granville had long ago suggested Hessians for service in Scotland⁹⁵—a proposal in which Hardwicke had concurred;⁹⁶ and it was finally decided (in virtue of the treaty) to send for this contingent to defend the English nation in case the reported invasion should actually materialize. But 8,000 mercenaries seemed a tiny force to defend England, and Waldegrave writes sadly, 'We first engaged in a war, and then began to prepare ourselves.'⁹⁷

Fox was keenly alive to the unpreparedness and the danger. In explaining the necessity of sending two battalions from Ireland to America, he wrote to Devonshire in part: 'There is not in all the west and north of England a single soldier . . . you have a militia and ability to raise troops, which we have not. Recruits come in very slowly

received between the end of December 1755 and the 6th of April 1756:' Add. MSS., 35895, f. 169 et seq. Of the reports received in January the first came from Marseilles, the second from Bern, and the third from Turin. These specifically mentioned Minorca as the point threatened; but intelligence before this had attested to the active preparations of the French at Toulon.

⁹⁵ Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 12, 1755: Add. MSS., 32860, f. 13.

⁹⁶ Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 13, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 30.

⁹⁷ Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 56.

. . . America is in the utmost danger, and without speedy assistance, our military affairs there (will become) desperate. If a landing of any considerable number of men is effected in either Great Britain or Ireland, the one island must certainly assist the other. But America must not be given up to avoid danger incurred only on account of America.' ⁹⁸

Yet Newcastle was divided between his fears of imminent invasion and his eagerness to make a diplomatic scheme prove its merit. Holland continued to evade or refuse her treaty-obligations to provide 6,000 men, and Fox, Granville and Anson had told the First Lord that he would never get them ; ⁹⁹ yet he persisted in his short-sighted policy rather than ask for Hanoverians, or (which would have been far better) set on foot a militia-bill that would be of a quick and operative nature. This last, it might be urged, was the only honourable and patriotic remedy.

In the interim of suspense the First Lord thought to raise additional regiments on the Irish establishment, and sent instructions to Devonshire to that effect. ¹⁰⁰ But the consolation—or excuse—

⁹⁸ Fox to Devonshire, January 31, 1756 : Torrens, *History of British Cabinets*, II. 273.

⁹⁹ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 30.

¹⁰⁰ Newcastle to Devonshire, March 7, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32863, f. 214. Devonshire himself had been the author of the proposal, since he believed that the raising of two regiments ostensibly for Irish defence would be more likely of acceptance by the Dublin Parliament than the money-request which

was not allowed him. At a Cabinet meeting on the 12th of March, it was decided that the proposal could not be carried out without the sanction of the English Parliament,¹⁰¹ and Fox took upon himself the task of contradicting the former letter to the Lord Lieutenant.¹⁰² The crisis in foreign affairs had begun to bring out the first signs of dissension in the Ministry; would it in time bring dissolution? was the question. Meanwhile Frederick was allowed to mediate between the two Western Powers¹⁰³—an attempt which was clearly doomed to failure.

On the 1st of March Keene wrote to Under-Secretary Amyand of the English Foreign Office, bidding him inform Fox that Spain's object was 'friendship in particular and peace in general'.¹⁰⁴ This was indeed assuring; and yet the fact could not properly be overlooked that the temptation of the Spanish Court was great. France was putting constant pressure upon her southern neighbour to come into the war; she would take Minorca at her own expense, and hand it over to

Newcastle had meditated.—Newcastle to Devonshire, February 6, 1756: Add. MSS., 32863, f. 3; Devonshire to Newcastle, February 24, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 77.

¹⁰¹ The decision may have been actuated by the dread of Irish troops, which, as the Cabinet well knew, was a very general feeling in England. Apparently Newcastle had acted hastily and without consulting his colleagues.

¹⁰² Newcastle to Devonshire, March 13, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 273. Fox's letter is not in evidence.

¹⁰³ Newcastle to Devonshire, March 7, 1755.

¹⁰⁴ Keene to Amyand, March 1, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 144.

Spain, and would even assist in the recapture of Gibraltar if Spain would only provide fifteen ships of the line, to continue in the service 'until' (wrote Cressener's agent) 'she has reduced England to reasonable terms'.¹⁰⁵

Perhaps if General Wall had not been at the head of the party that had overthrown Ensenada and the French cabal, he would have succumbed to the golden opportunity of striking England at a time when her fortunes were at the lowest ebb; and had Spain offered to attack Minorca and thus allowed France to turn her whole attention to operations in the north, it would be hard to say to what extent disasters would have fallen upon the English Government. But, fortunately, far from agreeing to this, the Court of Madrid offered to mediate between England and France—a plan which Newcastle told Fox deserved 'serious consideration',¹⁰⁶ even though Frederick was already pursuing the same end. In view of all this England owes some debt to General Wall.

The Spanish Minister's commendable design was carefully put into operation, and its failure not long deferred. On the 22nd Keene wrote to Secretary Fox that the French Court insisted that the preliminary demand made through Rouillé in January was unalterable;¹⁰⁷ and word also reached

¹⁰⁵ Secret intelligence from Versailles, February 22 and March 17, 1756: Add. MSS., 32863, ff. 59, 322.

¹⁰⁶ Newcastle to Fox, March 7, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 218.

¹⁰⁷ Keene to Fox, March 22, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 434.

Newcastle that the Prussian attempt had met with similar failure.¹⁰⁸ In the same letter from Keene much credence was apparently given to the persistent rumours of a Franco-Austrian convention, and the alleged articles of the supposed treaty were revealed in full. Finally the Ambassador announced that Spain had received intelligence that Port Mahon was to be attacked in April.

The day after Keene's letter was written—and hence some time before it was received—Holdernesse sent Keith a long list of instructions,¹⁰⁹ among which we may note that the Ambassador was to palliate the significance of the treaty with Prussia and (above all things) learn the truth respecting the rumours of a Franco-Austrian understanding. With these instructions Keith diligently complied;¹¹⁰ but since his recent efforts to conciliate the Empress had only added weight to the pressure of Austria upon the ministers of Louis XV,¹¹¹ it is

¹⁰⁸ Hardwicke to Newcastle, March 21, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32863, f. 448.

¹⁰⁹ Holdernesse to Keith, March 23, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 459.

¹¹⁰ Keith applied first to Kaunitz, who told him that he had been commanded not to discuss the matter. Getting no satisfaction from either Chancellor or Emperor, Keith finally asked an audience of the Empress ; but here again his efforts met with failure. 'Too late !' was her observation on the question of a better understanding with England ; and the Ambassador told his chief that the instigator of her forward policy was Kaunitz, who 'had got absolute power, as if by witchcraft, of the Empress's spirit'.—Keith to Holdernesse, May 16, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 1.

¹¹¹ Waddington, *Louis XV et le Renversement des Alliances*, p. 324.

hardly strange that his efforts were now to prove futile. The policy of Kaunitz had at last reaped its fruit. Even before the Convention of Westminster secret negotiations had been set on foot with the Court of Versailles, and although a Franco-Prussian alliance was not wholly incompatible with Frederick's recent policy, and although for a time the Court of Versailles showed its characteristic wavering, the fact became none the less clear that the pride of his Most Christian Majesty had sustained a blow that nothing could alleviate save revenge. Thus it came about that the shrewd diplomacy of Vienna was crowned at last with success, and on May 1, 1756, was concluded the famous Treaty of Versailles—the second phase of that diplomatic revolution, which made a general war inevitable.

Meanwhile the crisis was fast being reached in England and her Ministry. Some time ago Fox had written, 'We are undoubtedly going to be invaded in more parts than one, and perhaps in Ireland at the same time. And we—that is, the people—despise it. The more they fear France, the less they will, I imagine, do in their own defence when the time of danger comes.'¹¹² This was rather pessimistic, but Newcastle himself realized the situation with the keenest agony; yet he had failed to see that if the 'people' were inert, it was because they were not encouraged to be otherwise; and, having wasted a season in futile

¹¹² Fox to Devonshire, January 31, 1756: *Torrens*, II. 273.

despatches to The Hague, he was forced to believe that Hanoverians must be added to the expected contingent from Hesse, or the dreaded tidal-wave from across the Channel would submerge him at his post, and the nation, which he had thought might conciliate the powers by subsidies, would be helpless to defend herself in the hour of need. There is, in fact, no denying the Ministry's fears, in view of what was expressed in writing by Newcastle, Fox, and others. Whether there was any real likelihood that so bold an attempt would be made upon the British Isles, and whether they were justified in believing as they did, is perhaps an unanswerable question. Pitt is said to have pronounced the present means of defence sufficient.¹¹³

On the 23rd of March the King notified the Houses that he had summoned the Hessians, and replies were made, that of the Commons being the work of Fox and Murray.¹¹⁴ The former had been as zealous as usual in hunting up support for the King's measures ; and so Bedford had promised to send every one over whom he had the least influence, while the Cavendishes had been likewise solicited.¹¹⁵ 'Fear predominated so much,' wrote Walpole, in his account of the day's events, 'that the cry was

¹¹³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 31.

¹¹⁴ Fox to Newcastle, March 20, 1756 (first letter of that date).

¹¹⁵ Fox to Newcastle, March 20, 1756 (second letter of that date).

for Hanoverians too.’¹¹⁶ It was not, however, until the 29th of April that the King was asked for his electoral troops, Sackville being then prevailed upon to move the address for that purpose ; and the Administration was supported by 259 votes against 92. When the estimates were brought in a few days later, Pitt rose and lashed the Ministry for their flagrant neglect ; this waste on Hessians, he said, would have conquered America, or saved Minorca of which he despaired ; they had even waited till now before asking for troops, and the neglect appeared wilful. ‘Had we been secured here,’ he exclaimed, ‘the fleet might have gone safely to Minorca,’—the neglect looked wilful ; and he concluded by a scathing portrayal of a disjointed and irresponsible Ministry.

Fox replied that nobody would be glad to receive advantage from the loss of Minorca, and asked if Pitt wished to see a sole minister.

‘No,’ was Pitt’s retort ; he had no wish to see a sole minister, but ‘a system and decision’. ‘The loss of Minorca,’ he continued, ‘must be caused by infatuation or design, for miners for Fort St. Philip are only raising now. Indeed, were Mr. Fox “sole minister”, there would be decision enough.’¹¹⁷

The bitter diatribe was most emphatically just, and no one knew this better than Fox. Indeed it

¹¹⁶ Walpole to Conway, March 25, 1756 : *Letters of Horace Walpole*, III. 407.

¹¹⁷ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, I. 34-5.

must have cheered him considerably when Pitt had implied that vigorous action was beyond the Secretary's power to inaugurate. In all questions Hardwicke was certain to be in unison with Newcastle; Holderness and Robinson were little more than automata; while Anson was generally reckoned upon to stand with his father-in-law. Finally, the erratic Lord President had doubted if a single ship of the line could be spared for the Mediterranean.¹¹⁸ So Fox as a member of an Opposition in the *Conciliabulum* was in helpless and unhappy solitude. The fact that the Cabinet in its broad sense was hardly ever convoked is apparent to any reader of the papers and despatches of the period, and Granville's term, *Conciliabulum*, is employed more than once in the letters of the time. It is therefore almost needless to point out how a small number of men were enabled to dictate the foreign policy of the Government; and in the existing conditions of the present little circle, it meant that Newcastle was virtually dictator.

Meanwhile the question had been forced upon the Ministry of doing something to save Minorca, inasmuch as the reports of French designs had been too numerous to be overlooked.¹¹⁹ Intelligence

¹¹⁸ Lyttelton to Lyttelton, August 8, 1756: Phillimore, *Memoirs of Lyttelton*, II. 519.

¹¹⁹ Reports of the designs on Minorca fairly flooded the Ministry during February.—'State of the Intelligence,' &c.: Add. MSS., 35890, f. 169. See note 92.

written from Paris on the 8th of March had declared that the attack upon the island was intended beyond a doubt,¹²⁰ adding that the motive was to induce England to weaken her army at home ; and a month later word was received by the First Lord that preparations for the expedition were already far advanced.¹²¹ Fox had done what he could to make his colleagues realize the danger and see the necessity of sending a squadron to protect the island. The condition of both Gibraltar and Minorca had long been an object of neglect by his late department, and Governor Tyrawly of the latter place was in England at the time and fully acquainted with the weakness of Port Mahon and its fortifications. According to Fox, the Duke of Cumberland had, as long ago as last Christmas, advised sending relief, and the Secretary himself, during the first week of March, had urged the despatch of a strong squadron to meet the emergency.¹²² But fear of France's hazardous invasion and the First Minister's parleys with the Dutch had caused the Secretary to be outvoted ; and soon the mad scramble for defenders of the Channel would paralyse the Ministry's action when at last it should be taken.

On the 15th of March Fox wrote to Keene that

¹²⁰ Secret Intelligence, March 8, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32863, f. 224.

¹²¹ Secret Intelligence, March 20, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 394.

¹²² Fox said that he 'could not prevail'.—Doddington, *Diary*, May 7, 1756.

Admiral Byng would be despatched 'with a superior force' to the Mediterranean; ¹²³ and on the 27th he sent the Admiralty the necessary instructions.¹²⁴ About a week seems to have sufficed for the equipment of the expedition, for on the 7th of April, Byng, with Admiral West as second-in-command, left Spithead with ten ships of the line.

Three days after the departure of the English squadron from Spithead, the expedition of Richelieu, consisting of twelve ships of the line (commanded by Admiral de la Gallissonnière), and transports carrying about 12,000 troops, sailed from Toulon; and a landing being effected on Minorca a week later, the siege of Port Mahon was commenced.

The British defenders consisted of a garrison of less than 4,000 men under General Blakeney, with a squadron of five ships, under Commander Edgcumbe, to protect the harbour; 'Blakeney and Edgcumbe wrote with great spirit as if they feared nothing. The first was a good officer, but rather superannuated; the other a mettled young man without much experience or knowledge.'¹²⁵ Blakeney was undoubtedly hampered by want of sufficient officers, since not only was Governor Tyrawly absent from his post in the time of

¹²³ Fox to Keene, March 8, 1756: *F. O. Papers*, Pub. Rec. Off.

¹²⁴ Fox to the Admiralty, March 27, 1756: Add. MSS., 32895.

¹²⁵ Lyttelton to Lyttelton, April 28, 1756: Phillimore, II. 505.

danger, but all of the colonels of the regiments were said to be away on furloughs as well.¹²⁶ Edgcumbe, seeing the inferiority of his little fleet, landed some marines to assist the garrison, and then sailed away for Gibraltar.

The smallness of the French fleet was known with a fair amount of certainty by the English Ministers; yet why did they not make victory reasonably sure by giving Byng a greater margin of superiority? The answer depends for its explanation on two facts: first and chiefly, the condition of the British navy at the time, and secondly, the need, or supposed need, of vessels in the Channel to protect the British Isles in cases of attempted invasion. From a report produced after later investigation it appears that at this time the British navy numbered but 168 vessels, of which 44 (including Hawke's squadron) were in service abroad, and 53 employed as convoys of trade, or to cruise off different points in the British Isles for defensive purposes. Of the remaining 71, 58 were out of commission, either from shattered condition, deficiency in equipment, or lack of men. This leaves a balance of only 13 ships, 'ready for immediate service upon an emergency;' and the extreme scarcity of sailors—a situation which had necessitated an embargo (March 3) on all shipping¹²⁷—was probably account-

¹²⁶ Mahon, *History of Eng.* IV, 65.

¹²⁷ Disposition of H.M.'s ships from January 1 to May 1, 1756: Add. MSS., 33047, f. 24.

able for the fact that only ten of the thirteen available ships were given to Byng.

The exact number of vessels detailed for home-defence is not clear, but Hawke certainly had nineteen ships of the line employed for watching the movements of the Brest and Rochfort squadrons of the French ; and, while it would appear that some of the aforesaid vessels cruising at different points on the English and Irish coasts might easily have been recalled, the Ministry's terror of a French descent had evidently decided—if they had considered the point at all—that such a measure would be inexpedient. In other words, Hawke had been given an ample squadron, but was not then sufficiently trusted ¹²⁸ to intercept an expedition encumbered by convoys of troops.

But apart from considerations of what might or might not be done with the material at hand, since, in view of the breach with France, an attempt upon Minorca had not only been a possibility, but had been constantly proclaimed from various sources, it is clear that the British navy was in no way prepared to meet the emergency ; and there is no evidence to show that during the crucial years of 1754 and 1755 Anson had made any

¹²⁸ The nervousness of the Admiralty may have been partly due to the attitude of the admirals in service. Writing to Newcastle, June 6, Anson complains, 'I don't know how it comes to pass, that unless our commanders-in-chief have a very great superiority they never think themselves safe.'—Add. MSS., 32865, f. 221. Apparently Anson did not at this period inspire the navy with much confidence.

representation of the state of affairs at the Admiralty. It is possible, of course, that he reported the matter to his colleagues of the *Conciliabulum*; but in any case the Admiralty needed a thorough renovation, and it had been Anson's duty to see that it was done.

Byng's instructions sent to him, March 30, were perfectly explicit. He was to put to sea 'immediately' and proceed 'with the utmost expedition' to Gibraltar. He must then ascertain whether any French squadron had passed through the straits, and as such a movement would probably mean that it was bound for America, he should send a detachment (specified) under Admiral West to make for Louisburg; but whether this should be the case or not, he was to go 'without a moment's loss of time' to Minorca, with or without the above detachment according to the above circumstances. He was then 'to use all possible means in his power for it's (Port Mahon's) relief', unless the place should not be attacked, in which case he should impede or intercept the French fleet by stationing himself off Toulon. The Admiral was further instructed to exert the utmost vigilance throughout in protecting Minorca and Gibraltar from any hostile attempt.¹²⁹

Two days afterward Byng had written the Admiralty, with regard to the instructions received: 'I . . . shall use every endeavour and means in my

¹²⁹ Campbell, *Lives of the Admirals*, IV. 454-5. The instructions to take a battalion from Gibraltar were sent him the next day.

power to frustrate the design of the enemy, if they should make an attempt on Minorca, knowing the great importance of that island to the Crown of Great Britain.’¹³⁰

Fowke, the Governor of Gibraltar, had meanwhile been instructed by a despatch, dated March 21, both to receive a regiment of fusiliers which had been sent with Byng, and also to place under the latter’s command a detachment from his regiments that would in all equal a battalion.¹³¹ A week later, at the instance of the Admiralty, which seemed now to be teeming with action, an order was sent, in effect rescinding the previous one, since it commanded Fowke both to let the regiment of fusiliers go on its way, and to detach the aforesaid battalion, if Port Mahon was ‘in any likelihood of being attacked’.¹³²

The Cabinet and the Admiralty had now done all the work they considered necessary, and must content themselves with awaiting results. Fox had written to Keene on the 1st of April that great hopes were entertained that Byng would frustrate the French designs,¹³³ and intelligence was at hand (though unconfirmed) to the effect that the French fleet was poorly equipped and manned.¹³⁴ On the

¹³⁰ Byng to the Admiralty, April 1, 1756 : Add. MSS., 35895, f. 342.

¹³¹ Barrington to Fowke, March 21, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 366.

¹³² Barrington to Fowke, March 28, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 368.

¹³³ Fox to Keene, April 1, 1756.

¹³⁴ ‘French and English Army and Fleet’, dated September 10, 1756 : Add. MSS., 33047, f. 65.

10th Newcastle assured Devonshire that all would be safe if only Byng reached Minorca in time ;¹³⁵ and failed perhaps to realize that if Byng *were* too late, the whole weight of criminal responsibility would fall upon himself and his colleagues.

While navies were moving, diplomacy was not idle, and Austria, who, as Keene informed Fox, had given Spain a hint of her impending convention with France, was now trying artfully to ingratiate herself with the Court of Madrid.¹³⁶ Fox's reply questioned the authority of the reports respecting the aforementioned design, as Abreu, the Spanish ambassador in London, knew nothing of it. The Secretary also enclosed a warning, which Keene was to give General Wall, of intelligence received in England to the effect that a French intrigue was on foot at the Spanish Court to get the General dismissed from office.¹³⁷

Fox's despatches were invariably concise, straightforward and pertinent, and when he ultimately retired from office, the Court of Spain paid him the tribute of its regret, as well as commending his 'candour and capacity'.¹³⁸ How far he influenced diplomatic proceedings is difficult to ascertain, owing to the apparent scarcity of minutes and other material relative to meetings ; but in

¹³⁵ Newcastle to Devonshire, April 10, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32864, f. 204.

¹³⁶ Keene to Fox, April 5, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 153.

¹³⁷ Fox to Keene, April 23, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 374.

¹³⁸ Keene to Holderness, December 5, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32869, f. 426.

occasional letters we find traces of suggestions that he offered in the way of alterations or omissions. Although essentially a man of action, he was powerless (as we have said) against the Newcastle phalanx in the *Conciliabulum*, and he lacked that capacity for administrative leadership which might have compelled this body to follow his guidance. And yet, devoid as he was of every kind of constructive statesmanship, he had certainly more forethought than any of his colleagues, and hence his concern for Minorca—a feeling in no way allayed by Anson's assurance that 'Byng's squadron could beat anything the French had or could have in the Mediterranean'.¹³⁹ Such was clearly the sentiment in which Cabinet and Admiralty concurred, and Boscawen, in command of ten ships of the line recently put into shape, sailed on April 29 with orders to reinforce Hawke,¹⁴⁰—an action which was possibly due to the report¹⁴¹ that no less than 80,000 men were to take part in

¹³⁹ Doddington, *Diary*, May 7, 1756. Newcastle, writing to Fox the next day, tells us that Anson considered Byng 'strong enough'. This feeling had been somewhat intensified by a letter which Secretary Cleveland of the Admiralty had received from a captain on duty in the Mediterranean, and which appeared to show that Byng outnumbered his opponent, La Gallissonnière.—Harvey to Cleveland, April 17, 1756: Add. MSS., 32864, f. 306. But Fox, who seemed to disagree with every one, took a different view of the letter, and declared that there was 'bad as well as good in it'.—Fox to Newcastle, May 7, 1755: *ibid.*, f. 478.

¹⁴⁰ Disposition of H.M.'s ships, January 1 to May 1, 1756.

¹⁴¹ Received April 20.

the intended invasion of England.¹⁴² But this fleet, had it been sent to the Mediterranean instead, might have justified the hope that Byng would be reinforced in time.¹⁴³

That Fox argued strongly against this over-concentration is certainly not a point that is in evidence. Quite apart from the seeming uselessness of remonstrating with his colleagues, the Secretary himself was a victim of the general panic.¹⁴⁴ The only feature distinguishing the attitude of Fox from that of the others was the fact that he alone seemed to look beyond these fears; and when the suspicion haunted him that a new fleet was being detained merely to assist the Hessian transports,¹⁴⁵ such indifference as this to Minorca was more than he could stand. True, the Cabinet in this instance was blameless, but the grounds for distrusting it were justified.

¹⁴² Secret intelligence from Versailles, April 9, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 190.

¹⁴³ Boscawen's fleet might well have reached Byng in time. True the latter had been a month in reaching Gibraltar, but he had the misfortune of encountering violent gales. Newcastle, for his part, had expected that Byng would arrive off Port Mahon in three weeks' time.—Newcastle to Devonshire, April 27, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 411. At all events the idea was well worth the trial, and Fox at any rate should have urged it in view of his feelings regarding Minorca. But when the Cabinet met, on May 8, the effort was too late.

¹⁴⁴ See page 409.

¹⁴⁵ Hardwicke tells us that Fox had misconstrued the minute of the meeting on the 6th—that, in short, no such idea had ever been entertained by the Cabinet.—Hardwicke to Newcastle, May 9, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 304.

On May 7 Fox took the step of writing to Newcastle, urging that Boscawen be ordered to detach a number of ships to be sent immediately to the relief of Port Mahon ; ¹⁴⁶ and incidentally this fact seems to show that the Secretary had thought a private letter to the chief of the Ministry would be more propitious for the success of his proposal than a mention of it to the docile Cabinet the day before.

Newcastle replied that he concurred in Fox's plea for action, but that when Cumberland had made a similar proposal to Anson, the latter had protested against weakening Boscawen's fleet, and suggested that three or four large ships should be sent from England for the purpose. ¹⁴⁷ It seems that at the time of Boscawen's departure there had been but eight ships in port and 'in good condition', and 'only two fit for service, and those in want of men', ¹⁴⁸—which may account for the smallness of the number proposed by Anson.

On the evening of the same day (May 8) Fox, Anson, Holderness and Hardwicke held a meeting and decided that four ships of the line (with one regiment placed on board) should be sent immediately to reinforce Byng ; and the proposed alternative of drawing from Boscawen's squadron was abandoned without dissent. ¹⁴⁹ Fox had finally

¹⁴⁶ Fox to Newcastle, May 7, 1756.

¹⁴⁷ Newcastle to Fox, May 8, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 483.

¹⁴⁸ Disposition of H.M.'s ships, January 1 to May 1, 1756.

¹⁴⁹ Cleveland to Newcastle, May 9, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 504 ; Hardwicke to Newcastle, May 9, 1756.

roused his colleagues ; but the change had come too late. The reinforcement in question—which in a general way had been decided upon as early as Byng's departure¹⁵⁰—was eventually raised to five ships of the line and sent under Admiral Brodrick ; but the delay attending the despatch of Boscawen's squadron and in rendering the other vessels seaworthy had precluded any advantage in sending the fleet at all.

Outvoted generally by his colleagues, Fox had at the same time to bear the brunt of attacks in Parliament. He once declared his willingness to defend Newcastle in everything he could, but as for palliating his refusal to anticipate war and arm sooner, that was something he could not and would not do.¹⁵¹ A few weeks ago his sincerity had so far got the better of his habits as a politician that he insisted upon yielding to the pressure of the Opposition and giving support to a militia-bill.¹⁵² Newcastle well remembered that Fox, no less than Pitt, had clamoured that augmentation of forces at home should have been made earlier,¹⁵³ but he now

¹⁵⁰ ' French and English Army and Fleet ' (already cited).

¹⁵¹ Doddington, *Diary*, May 17, 1756.

¹⁵² Murray was right in holding him responsible for the success of the bill in the Commons.—Murray to Newcastle, May 24, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 104. It is more than likely that Fox, who had the management of the Commons, could have prevented its passage, if he had so desired ; and the fact seems clear that he wanted the Opposition to succeed. Hence Newcastle's assertion that he and Pitt were in alliance.

¹⁵³ This confirms Fox's account to Doddington ; but we are not told just when Fox made these appeals.

wrote sarcastically of the Secretary's attitude (asserting that the two were in alliance), and bewailed the fact that he (Newcastle) was being selected as the sole target of attack.¹⁵⁴ Revenge was certainly found later when the Newcastle defeated the bill in the Upper House,¹⁵⁵ and the Duke had expressed—strangely enough—his fear of strengthening the Crown and instilling in the people a fondness for arms.¹⁵⁶ It was his preference, rather, that a nation whose prestige was quite undimmed by any rival, should depend upon foreign troops for her defence.

For Fox, defending the Ministry meant defending it against Pitt. The latter said later that Anson was 'not fit to command a cock-boat in the river Thames';¹⁵⁷ but he must then have changed his mind, for he now praised the First Lord of the Admiralty and levelled his attacks at Newcastle.¹⁵⁸ 'I answered as well as I could,' wrote Fox to His Grace, 'but the isle of Minorca is

¹⁵⁴ Newcastle to Hardwicke, May 8, 1756.

¹⁵⁵ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 46.

¹⁵⁶ Newcastle to Devonshire, April 10, 1755: Add. MSS., 32864, f. 204.

¹⁵⁷ Almon, *Anecdotes of Chatham*, I. 158.

¹⁵⁸ Hardwicke endeavoured to soothe Newcastle by declaring that one in Pitt's position would invariably attack the head of the Government, and that in so doing there would always be 'a mixture both of malice and politics'. 'As to his scheme (*sic*) of "wilfully intending to lose Minorca in order to make a bad peace"' (see p. 411), he continued, 'it was scouted and ridiculed by everybody.'—Hardwicke to Newcastle, May 9, 1756: Add. MSS., 32864, f. 504.

a weight that is not easy to debate under.’¹⁵⁹ The point which exasperated the Secretary most was the habit the Duke had of vaunting his own innocence and laying the blame upon others: nobody blamed *him*; the City imputed nothing to *him*, as ‘the sea was not *his* province’—an insinuation against Anson that he would have been quick to repel under other circumstances. Fox did not tell the Duke (who was dining at Holland House) that the City was in reality very indignant at the neglect of Minorca; but he informed him that, in answering attacks in the Commons, he (Fox) was obliged to discriminate a little, although he had willingly defended him as ‘answerable only in an equal degree with his colleagues’. The Duke still persisted that no one could blame *him*.¹⁶⁰

Newcastle’s own arguments to Fox some days previously are almost ingenuous in their utter lack of breadth and comprehension. ‘The occasion of all our misfortunes,’ he writes, ‘and that will encrease every day, is that we are not equal to the work we have undertaken . . . and rather than own this truth when any misfortune happens, the Ministry are to be blamed.’ So far as Minorca was concerned, he did not think ‘the defence of that was difficult’, though he was ‘not more concerned to defend it than others’.¹⁶¹ The First Lord was, in fact, too sure of his personal righteous-

¹⁵⁹ Fox to Newcastle, May 7, 1756.

¹⁶⁰ Doddington, *Diary*, May 17, 1756.

¹⁶¹ Newcastle to Fox, May 8, 1756.

ness to realize the difficulties of his defender in the Commons.

This blind confidence of Newcastle, which was certain to be imitated by the nerveless shadows of the inner clique, had the effect of making Fox consider his personal situation. Would the oligarchy of the Cabinet make a scapegoat ¹⁶² of the man who disagreed with them? The thought was not a pleasant one, but yet the noticeable dissatisfaction with him naturally made it the more poignant. Meeting Murray one day, who praised him for his able defence of the Ministry a few days before, Fox thanked the Attorney-General, and then asked him as a favour to tell Granville what he thought of his conduct in general during the session. This makes one wonder if Fox was clinging to the hope that Granville would be independent enough to differ from his colleagues. Murray did what he could to assure his fellow in the Commons, but he thought that Fox must have reason to believe that the King was displeased with him—hence the message to Granville, who was intimate with the Crown.¹⁶³ The probability is that Fox was dissatisfied with himself and dreaded the consequences of his ambiguous position.

Meanwhile Admiral Byng, after a stormy passage, had reached Gibraltar on Sunday, the 2nd of May. He was at once informed that Minorca was in

¹⁶² He used this expression to Doddington, and dwelt upon it.

¹⁶³ Murray to Newcastle, May 24, 1756.

a state of siege, and naturally expected that his fleet should receive the reinforcement prescribed. But Fowke, on the basis (as he alleged ¹⁶⁴) of a possible alteration of the Cabinet's policy during the time which had elapsed since the despatches to him were written, immediately convoked a council of war, which gave its unanimous decision against weakening Gibraltar in the manner directed, although consenting to Byng's request that Edgcumbe's squadron be replenished with sailors.¹⁶⁵ The discretionary power, which Fowke had thus claimed, was purely an assumption, and under no circumstances justifiable from a military standpoint.

Yet, notwithstanding the council's decision, the Governor must have felt some uneasiness, in that he offered to let Byng have the detachment. The Admiral replied that he deemed the reinforcement for Edgcumbe to be sufficient.¹⁶⁶ The Governor's decision was then promptly reported to the authorities at home, who had certainly shown no belief in any change of circumstances. Indeed Barrington had written to Fowke on the 12th ordering the detachment of a battalion for Brodrick's command,¹⁶⁷ and Secretary Fox had sent a despatch under flying seal through Keene, likewise announcing the Cabinet's

¹⁶⁴ Fowke to Barrington, May 6, 1756 : Add. MSS., 35895, f. 368.

¹⁶⁵ Council of War held at Gibraltar, May 4, 1756 : *Admiralty In-letters*, Pub. Rec. Off.

¹⁶⁶ Fowke to Barrington, May 6, 1756.

¹⁶⁷ Barrington to Fowke, May 12, 1756.

intentions.¹⁶⁸ The Ministry was clearly putting its utmost weight into the expedition.

Admiral Byng was known as a brave man and a conscientious officer, but he seemed to lack confidence in himself, and was cowed by the weight of responsibility attached to an expedition of such moment. He had done nothing, moreover, to justify his promotion to so important a command, and had previously shown a tendency to be easily discouraged.¹⁶⁹ It would seem as though the Admiralty had picked him because the more capable admirals were required for the Channel service, in which interest chiefly centred because of the expected invasion. In his letter to Cleveland, written on the day of his arrival at Gibraltar, Byng showed distinctly his spirit of dejection. He would do all he could to relieve Blakeney, but information received made him doubt his ability to render assistance, and ‘*if he failed to relieve Port Mahon*’,¹⁷⁰ he would next consider the question of defending Gibraltar. The letter showed no desire to falter in duty, but it seemed to be designed to prepare the Admiralty for the failure he expected.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Fox to Keene, May 10, 1756 (enclosing despatch to Fowke): *F. O. Papers*, Spain, no. 151, Pub. Rec. Off.

¹⁶⁹ On receiving a certain commission in 1746 Byng pleaded that he was ‘not equal to the task’—an episode which Newcastle may have forgotten. See Torrens, *History of British Cabinets*, II. 96–7; Leadam, *Pol. Hist. of Eng.* (ed. Hunt and Poole), IX. 441.

¹⁷⁰ The italics are mine.

¹⁷¹ Byng to the Admiralty, May 4, 1756: *Admiralty In-Letters*, Pub. Rec. Off.

Having waited at Gibraltar six days (apparently for repairs), Byng put to sea with the fourteen vessels of his command,¹⁷² and on the 18th came in sight of the French fleet. Although slightly outnumbering his opponents, he carefully avoided engaging on the next day, and was even slow to fight on the 20th when the wind was in his favour. It is needless to relate in detail the conflict which took place later on the same day ; Byng employed antiquated and hazardous tactics, while La Gallissonnière seems to have made good use of his opportunities.¹⁷³ The result was indecisive.

Having sailed under cover of the night to a point well out of danger, Byng, in spite of the fact that the French admiral had also retired, made no effort to renew the action, but waited for some reason until the 24th, when he held a council and represented both his hopelessness of success and his fears for Gibraltar. The council, which must have included Admiral West, unanimously endorsed his opinion, and the decision, with five reasons appended, was transmitted to the Admiralty.¹⁷⁴ Fowke, before hearing of the disaster, replied to Fox's letter of the 10th, promising to comply with his orders received, unless (as he implied) his action should be affected by intelligence from

¹⁷² Four vessels from Edgecumbe's squadron being added.

¹⁷³ See Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, pp. 286-9.

¹⁷⁴ Council of War, on board H.M.'s ship *Ramillies*, at sea, on Monday, May 24, 1756. The minute is printed in Campbell's *Lives of the Admirals*, IV. 81.

Byng or Minorca. He deprecated the orders, however, and strongly supported his conduct respecting the former instructions.¹⁷⁵

On the 3rd of June the Ministry received the intelligence of Fowke's disobedience, and Barrington promptly reprimanded him by letter, declaring him superseded by Tyrawly, who would immediately sail to relieve him of his command.¹⁷⁶ The whole fatal news having arrived the same day,¹⁷⁷ the Cabinet (or its ruling members) met that evening, and voted to deprive Byng and West of their commands, Admiral Hawke being sent to relieve the former and see that both were brought home under arrest.¹⁷⁸ All this was, of course, too late to save Port Mahon, which fell on the 27th of June after a stubborn and praiseworthy defence. Blakeney, the veteran commandant, was commended by the King,¹⁷⁹ and rewarded with a barony.¹⁸⁰

Both Cabinet and Court were in the greatest state of excitement over the fatal conduct of Byng. Fox wrote to Devonshire on the 3rd, and to Bedford

¹⁷⁵ Fowke to Fox, June 2, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 177.

¹⁷⁶ Draft of the letter among the *Newcastle Papers* : *ibid.*, f. 213.

¹⁷⁷ It is said that the news was first divulged by d'Abreu, the Spanish ambassador, who had received a letter from La Gallissonnière.—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 59.

¹⁷⁸ Fox to Devonshire, June 3, 1755 : Torrens, II. 289.

¹⁷⁹ Barrington to Blakeney, draft in *Newcastle Papers* : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 217.

¹⁸⁰ Mahon, *History of England*, IV. 71.

on the 4th, the lamentable tidings. Cumberland alone tried to be cheerful by urging that Minorca might yet be saved, and Fox told Bedford that he heartily wished he could believe so.¹⁸¹ Meanwhile war had already been declared against France on the 18th of May; and Parliament had been prorogued on the 27th—probably at Fox's instance—lest the news of some misfortune might reach the members while in session.¹⁸²

When the disastrous news became public, the outcry was too great to be silenced or unheeded. Lampoons appeared, which knew no respect for ministers, and portended ill for the Admiral. Newcastle, frightened nearly into hysteria, promised that Byng should be speedily hanged,¹⁸³ while in the Cabinet he spent his time blaming Fox, or casting opprobrium on the man who had thrown away his opportunities of victory. Fox, for his part, returned the compliment to the First Lord,¹⁸⁴ and is said to have felt that the indirect cause of the disaster was the refusal of the Dutch to send a contingent in the spring;¹⁸⁵ which, if true, would seem to mean that in Fox's opinion the necessity of transporting the German troops prevented the sending of further strength. But excuses could not mitigate the seriousness of the

¹⁸¹ Fox to Bedford, June 4, 1756: *Bedford Corres.* II. 195.

¹⁸² Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 58.

¹⁸³ Walpole, *Memoirs of George II*, II. 70.

¹⁸⁴ Grenville's narrative, *Grenville Papers*, I. 435.

¹⁸⁵ Almon, *Anecdotes of Chatham*, I. 158.

facts, and he now received information from Keene, which he felt only half revealed the situation ; the account, wrote Fox to Newcastle, confirmed the previous one of La Gallissonnière, whatever Byng might say of his own victory and the plight of the French.¹⁸⁶ Unquestionably the time was drawing nigh when either the Admiral or the Ministers must suffer—which it should be, or whether it should be both, must be determined by the weight of public sentiment or parliamentary power.

And what of the invasion of England, so long heralded from the Continent ? Advices from Paris ceased altogether to mention it, and the secret agents who absorbed all gossip, useful or otherwise, to retail to the First Lord, became speedily interested in the Franco-Austrian alliance. Plainly it must have dawned on the timorous Ministry that France had brought off a most clever feint,¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Fox to Newcastle, June 24, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 417. Byng's account of the battle (in a letter to the Admiralty) seems straightforward and manly. A French translation of it appears in M. Faucher-Saint-Maurice's *Le Contre-amiral Byng devant ses Juges et devant l'Histoire*, Royal Soc. of Lon., vol. XI. sec. 1, pp. 70–2.

¹⁸⁷ Mr. Corbett, in his recent work, *England in the Seven Years' War*, endeavours to show, chiefly on the basis of an intercepted letter, that the invasion was seriously intended. French writers do not hold this view. M. Coquelle, in his *Les Projets de Descente en Angleterre* (*Revue d'Histoire diplomatique*, XV. 606), writes : ' On sait que Louis XV *préféra* quelques mois plus tard engager la glorieuse mais stérile conquête de Port-Mahon.' The italics are mine. It seems hardly plausible that the French, after making such elaborate preparations for a descent upon England, should have suddenly

and the loss of Minorca had been the penalty for their blunder. Yet an epilogue seemed to be found in some intelligence that came to Fox from Abreu, whose name the former desired should not be mentioned in the connexion.¹⁸⁸ The report disclosed an intended descent by the French from Dunkirk, and Fox promised to propose to Anson that some small ships should be detailed to lie off that port and watch for hostile movements.¹⁸⁹ Whether or not the suggestion was ever carried out, the rumour seems to have been the last of its kind, which beset the gullible First Lord or his pessimistic Secretary.

The tidings having come of the fall of Port Mahon, Fox busied himself with pondering problems that were on hand, and some possible solutions for them. A long letter which Abreu had shown him, impressed him with the entire confidence which Wall felt in his ambassador at London ;¹⁹⁰ and Fox thought the present opportunity an excellent one for bringing Spain into active alliance with England. Pursuant to this design, he suggested in a Cabinet meeting that negotiations be commenced with Spain for the purpose of persuading her to accept Gibraltar in return for changed their policy, unless, as we suppose, they had been made with design.

¹⁸⁸ Fox to Newcastle, June 24, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 417.

¹⁸⁹ Newcastle to Cleveland, July 31, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 322.

¹⁹⁰ Fox to Newcastle, July 3, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 32.

Port Mahon, implying presumably that the Court of Madrid should undertake its recapture.

Newcastle, astounded by the proposal, put it off with some such comment as 'a bold stroke' or 'a great conception', and his subservient colleagues without doubt took their cue and kept silence. But with Fox the idea was not banished by one rebuff. About the 9th or 10th of July he had a long talk with Count Viri on the subject, and evidence appeared later that he also approached Abreu on the matter. At last reports of these conferences reached the sensitive ears of the First Lord, whose friendship for the Sardinian Ambassador was often justified by personal profit from the latter's duplicity, and he conjured his friend not to consider the matter on any account. The probability is that Fox, conversant as he was in affairs at Madrid, was eager to overtrump the French offer of Minorca—now all the more practicable from the French point of view—and considered that an exchange of fortresses *plus* Spain's participation in the war would be immensely advantageous for England. It was, in fact, a time when the Ministry needed a spectacular triumph to wipe out its criminal blunder, and however shallow may have been Fox's patriotism, he knew the art of politics and he understood the situation of himself and his colleagues. But to Newcastle, the monopolist in initiating foreign policy, and the man who had thwarted the redoubtable Bedford in 1748, the scheme of his lieutenant seemed only to

breathe indiscretion and revolt.¹⁹¹ No more was heard of the eccentric plan till Pitt took it up to no purpose in 1757.

The Treaty of Versailles, which knit France and Austria in a common bond for the coming struggle on the Continent, met with no surprise in England, having long been predicted, reported and described by intelligence from the Court of Madrid, the ambassador at Vienna, and secret service in Paris; but it was not till the 8th of June that the Ministers received an authentic copy of the terms.¹⁹² On that day the faithful Abreu handed the text of the treaty to Secretary Fox, who passed it among his colleagues.¹⁹³ Three days afterward Newcastle wrote to Yorke that the long-established 'system' of Europe was totally dissolved, and then plunged into an exposition of the proper courses and methods to be pursued as the result.¹⁹⁴ As a matter of fact the new treaty was

¹⁹¹ Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 12, 1756: Add. MSS., 32866, f. 141.

¹⁹² The first sight of anything authentic relating to the Treaty of Versailles was obtained by accident. Secretary Cleveland looked over Abreu's shoulder while the latter was reading a letter to Anson.—Anson to Newcastle, June 7, 1756: Add. MSS., 32864, f. 229. The news having leaked out, Abreu concluded, no doubt, that he might as well earn the gratitude of the Ministers by giving them a copy of the Treaty, which he did the next day.

¹⁹³ Fox to Newcastle, June 8, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 231.

¹⁹⁴ Newcastle to Yorke, June 11, 1756: *ibid.*, f. 231. Newcastle's method of discrimination between oneself and 'the other fellow' seems to have been readily grasped by the Ambassador, who observed in reply that whereas the Conven-

no more offensive in character (as yet) than the English alliance with Prussia, and it was the Duke himself, as we have seen, who had originally touched the spring which brought this revolution into being.

But the Duke of Newcastle's dreams of a great alliance against France need never have been penned.¹⁹⁵ By steadily ignoring the real purport of Austrian policy, the Court of Versailles had been enticed into an alliance that was foreign to its interests and ruinous to its fortunes. The capture of Port Mahon was the one brilliant triumph in the most humiliating war that France had ever waged. Yet it must be admitted that to seek compensation in Germany for inevitable losses in America was not of necessity a short-sighted policy on the part of a nation essentially military. The difficulty lay in the hopeless incapacity of the Government of Louis XV. France remembered her military prestige, not conscious that that prestige was a phantom of the past.

Of the distant Court of St. Petersburg the English Ministers could never believe themselves sure, and Viri probably felt safe when he gave

tion of Westminster had detached an ally from the enemies of Austria, the Treaty of Versailles meant the abandonment of an old ally to league with the enemy of the latter.—Yorke to Newcastle, June 18, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32865, f. 339.

¹⁹⁵ Austria, Russia, Holland, and the states of the Empire should assist England and Prussia in the measures against France.—Newcastle to Yorke, March 23, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32863, f. 467. The sketching of diplomatic combinations was a pastime to which Newcastle was passionately devoted.

hopes that Sardinia would join with England if Russia fulfilled what was expected of her.¹⁹⁶ By skilful diplomacy Williams kept the Russians ignorant of the Convention of Westminster until the Czarina had ratified her treaty with England;¹⁹⁷ but the anger that followed revelation could admit of but one result. It was said with positive certainty that the Court of Vienna had consulted the northern nation before uniting with France,¹⁹⁸ and so, when the latter added her pressure upon the Czarina, the mask was at last flung off. The half-hearted lady, upon whom Newcastle had staked so many hopes, had consented to his whims only because she saw in them a possible means of menacing Prussia. Eventually she joined actively in the opposite 'system', and, together with Sweden (whose friendship for France had ripened during the summer¹⁹⁹), became a member of that confederacy which nearly brought Frederick to his knees. Even Spain was for one moment thought to waver,²⁰⁰ and France persistently cherished the hope that she would renew her natural alliance²⁰¹; that she waited until the

¹⁹⁶ Newcastle to Yorke, June 11, 1756.

¹⁹⁷ Williams to Holdernessee, April 11, 1756 : *F. O. Papers*, Russia, no. 62, Pub. Rec. Off.

¹⁹⁸ Barck to Höpken, June 23, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 322.

¹⁹⁹ Barck to Höpken, July 8, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 66.

²⁰⁰ Memorandum for the King, August 16, 1756 : Add. MSS., 32866, f. 468.

²⁰¹ Secret Intelligence from Cressener, August 1, 1756 : *ibid.*, f. 333.

chances of success were so small is only to be explained by a subsequent change of rulers and its immediate effect upon Wall. At present the friendship of England was not idly to be tossed away.

In August, 1756, apprised by treachery of an elaborate coalition against him, Frederick peremptorily demanded an explanation from the Court of Vienna, and when the request was indignantly refused, he marched a force of 60,000 into Saxony, and thus began the Seven Years' War.

A new and wider arena is now opened. France has diffused her strength by plunging into a bitter European quarrel, and in that act has abandoned her opportunities against a country whose directors Fox said, 'were no more able to carry on this war than his three children.'²⁰² Thus French policy helped England to weather the storm until Pitt should arise as the saviour of her empire.

²⁰² Doddington, *Diary*, May 17, 1756.

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